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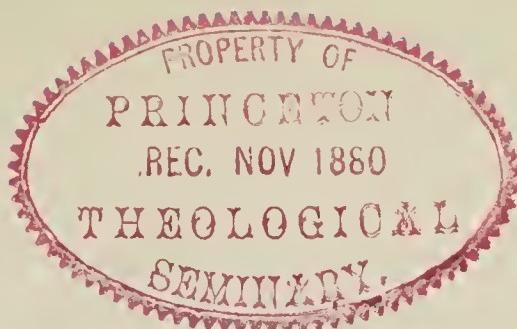
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P R E F A C E.

THE design of the following Work is to present a simple and Scriptural view of the Person, Character, Work, and Offices of the Divine Redeemer ; to collect from the word of God the varied glories and excellences of Immanuel.

The first thing which gave rise to the undertaking, was the simple exercise of collecting and transcribing from Scripture all the Names and Titles given to our Lord. These, when systematically arranged, seemed to form an impressive compendium, of all that the Son of God was by essential Deity, of all that he became in assuming Humanity, of all the gracious ends for which he took upon him our nature, of all the precious benefits thence flowing to his people, and of all *their* corresponding duties.

Finding this mere Catalogue of Names so impressive, the next exercise was to illustrate each by one or two appropriate texts of Scripture : And this

done, a few words seemed necessary, to prove the right application of the Name or Title to our Lord Jesus, and to offer a short practical remark. The idea now occurred, that a small publication on this scale might be useful to the Young, in Sabbath Schools and elsewhere ; and it was accordingly begun.

Very few of the Titles, however, had been illustrated in this manner, when it was found impossible to keep within the prescribed limits. Each successive Title, as it was made the subject of prayer, meditation, and searching the Scriptures, presented itself under so many new and delightful aspects, and suggested so many practical lessons, that the lines grew into pages, and it was found necessary to reduce the original number of Titles, by arranging them under general heads, to about one-third ; and thus, by degrees, the Work assumed its present form and size.

Deeply conscious of the deficiencies of these Essays, and of their unworthiness of so high and holy a Theme, the Author is yet induced to lay them before the Public, from the consideration that there is no other Work extant on the same plan.

The Old Testament Titles of the Saviour are indeed illustrated in the first volume of SERLE's *Horæ Solitariæ*; and with a depth of thought, a richness of spiritual unction, and an exalted strain of devotion, which justly entitle it to the high place it holds in the estimation of enlightened Christians. But the large proportion of critical and controversial matter contained in that volume, which so much enhances its value and interest to the Student, renders it proportionably less suited to the general Reader. Another valuable Work, on the Names and Titles of Christ, by the late Rev. WILLIAM GOODE, has recently come to the Author's knowledge. This Work deserves to be better known than it seems to be in this part of the Island; but its size, extending to six volumes octavo, places it beyond the reach of a great majority of Readers; and the subject, it will be admitted, is one of such infinite and fundamental importance, that it should be made accessible to all classes and ages; an end which, it is hoped, may be more effectually attained by the following Essays than by the learned Dissertations above alluded to.

The Quotations interspersed through these pages

will show that the Writer has frequently borrowed assistance from such Authors as LEIGHTON, CHARNOCK, FLAVEL, SCOTT, &c. : but acknowledgment is chiefly due to CRUDEN, whose invaluable Concordance, not only afforded the best facilities for tracing each Title throughout the Sacred Volume, but, by its clear and satisfactory definitions, also greatly aided their illustration.

This Work is now humbly commended to the blessing of Him whose perfections it aims to show forth: in the earnest hope that he will deign to make use of it, to his own glory, and to the benefit of many souls.

EDINBURGH, October 15, 1838.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

TITLES OF DEITY BELONGING TO THE SON IN COMMON WITH THE FATHER AND THE HOLY GHOST.

	PAGE
ESSAY I.—Jehovah, or, I am that I am,	1
II.—Jehovah Sabaoth, or, Lord of Hosts,	10
III.—The Lord, or Adonai,	18
IV.—God,—ineluding,	27
The Almighty, or the Mighty God,	30
The Omnipresent and Omniscient God,	35
God only wise,	40
The Holy God, or the Holy One,	47
A Just God—the Just One,	52
The Good Lord,	57
The Lord that is Faithful—the God of Truth,	64

PART II.

TITLES PECULIAR TO GOD THE SON IN HIS DIVINE NATURE.

ESSAY V.—The Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of Old, from Everlasting,—ineluding,	73
The Angel of the Lord, or Angel-Jehovah,	74
He that Dwelt in the Bush,	82
Wonderful,	85

	PAGE
ESSAY VI.—The Word,—Wisdom,	88
VII.—The Son—the Only Begotten Son of God,	98
VIII.—Immanuel—or God with us—or God on our side, 108	

PART III.

TITLES DESCRIPTIVE OF THE INCARNATION AND HUMILIATION OF THE SON.

ESSAY IX.—The Child Jesus,	117
X.—Jesus of Nazareth,	127
XI.—Son of Man,	137
XII.—Man of Sorrows,	145
XIII.—A Curse,	159

PART IV.

THE PRINCIPAL OFFICES, TO SUSTAIN WHICH THE SON BECAME INCARNATE.

ESSAY XIV—Surety,	171
XV.—Sacrifice,—including, Burnt-Offering — Peace-Offering—Sin-Offering—Trespass- Offering—The Red Heifer,	179
XVI.—The Lamb,	193
XVII.—Redeemer,	202
XVIII.—Mediator,	213
XIX.—Jesus, or Saviour,	224
XX.—Christ, Messiah, or Anointed,	236
XXI.—Prophet,	252
XXII.—Priest,	275
XXIII.—King,	292

PART V.

TITLES EXPRESSIVE OF THE RELATIONS IN WHICH,
AS MAN AND MEDIATOR, THE SON STANDS TO
THE FATHER.

	PAGE
ESSAY XXIV.—God's Elect,—including,	311
His Servant,	312
The Branch,	313
The Beloved of God,	328
The Man of God's Right Hand,	330

VOLUME II.

PART VI.

TITLES EXPRESSIVE OF THE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS
BESTOWED BY CHRIST ON HIS PEOPLE, THROUGH
THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

ESSAY XXV.—The Last Adam—Covenant of the Peo-	
ple—Everlasting Father—Testator,	1
XXVI.—The Life,—including, Quickening Spi-	
rit—Bread of Life—Tree of Life—	
True Vine—Prince of Life—Our Life,	
or Life Eternal,	29
XXVII.—The Light,—including, Light of Life—	
Light of the World—Morning Star—	
Sun of Righteousness,	52
XXVIII.—Author and Finisher of our Faith, . . .	67
XXIX.—Our Justification—The Lord our Righte-	
ousness,	90
XXX.—Our Peace—Prince of Peace—Shiloh, . . .	102
XXXI.—The Way—The Door,	114
XXXII.—Foundation—Corner-Stone—Rock of	
Ages,	122

ESSAY XXXIII.—Refuge,—including, Rock or Hiding-place, City of Refuge, Ark, Stronghold, Tower, Fortress, Shadow—Dwelling-place or Habitation—Sanctuary,	134
XXXIV.—Shield and Buckler—Ensign or Banner—The Lord our Banner—Captain of the Lord's Host—Seed of the Woman,	149
XXXV.—Sanctification—Example,	173
XXXVI.—Wisdom—Counsellor,	196
XXXVII.—The Consolation of Israel,	210
XXXVIII.—The Hope of Israel,	228
XXXIX.—The Joy of Israel,	242
XL.—The Glory of Israel,	255

PART VII.

ADDITIONAL OFFICES, OF A MORE PERSONAL NATURE, WHICH THE REDEEMER SUSTAINS TOWARDS HIS PEOPLE.

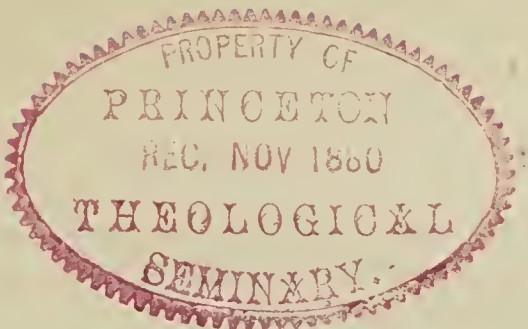
ESSAY XLI.—The Shepherd of Israel — The Good Shepherd,	267
XLII.—Physician,	279
XLIII.—Friend—Friend of Sinners,	292
XLIV.—Brother,	307
XLV.—Bridegroom—Husband,	321
XLVI.—Head of the Body—Head over all Things to the Church,	335
XLVII.—The Resurrection—He that Ascended up on High—Forerunner,	352
XLVIII.—The Righteous Judge—Judge of Quick and Dead,	371
XLIX.—All in All—Portion—Inheritance,	395

T I T L E S A N D O F F I C E S

OF OUR

L O R D J E S U S C H R I S T.





PART I.

TITLES OF DEITY BELONGING TO THE SON
IN COMMON WITH THE FATHER AND
THE HOLY GHOST.

ESSAY I.

JEHOVAH, OR, I AM THAT I AM.

WE are about to study that awful name, which the ancient people of God would not utter, lest they should profane it, and which the angels dare not pronounce, without veiling their faces with their wings. May we then approach the study with humble reverence, as becomes creatures inquiring after their Creator, children of the dust desiring to know the Father of their spirits, sinners seeking their Saviour.

The grand peculiarity of the name JEHOVAH is, that it can be applied to none other than the true and living God. There is indeed but *one God* and *one Lord*, in the high and proper sense of the terms; yet these terms may be applied, in a lower sense, to the false gods of the heathen, or to men possessing authority and dominion. But JEHOVAH is God's own peculiar name. His name

alone is JEHOVAH, who is Most High over all the earth.¹ He says, ‘ I am JEHOVAH, that is my name : and my glory will I not give to another.’²

There is a majestic simplicity in this the incommunicable name of the Most High. It seems to mean *self-existence*, eternal, underived, independent, immutable.

Of the same import is that name wherein God revealed himself to Moses out of the bush,—‘ I AM THAT I AM,’³ which signifies, *I am he that exists*; I AM, and there is none else beside me.

From the manner in which this revelation is expressed in the 6th chapter of Exodus, we have been led to suppose that God had not till then made himself known by the name JEHOVAH; for it is said, ‘ God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD; and I appeared unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.’⁴

This was, however, far from being the first time that the sacred name had been revealed. Moses himself had constantly used it in the preceding history. We read in the book of Genesis, that the patriarchs built their altars, and called upon the name of JEHOVAH;⁵ that Abraham called the spot where he was about to sacrifice Isaac, JEHOVAH-jireh;⁶ and that God, speaking to Jacob in Bethel, said, ‘ I am JEHOVAH, the God of Abraham.’^{7*}

¹ Ps. lxxxiii. 18.

² Is. xlvi. 8.

³ Ex. iii. 14.

⁴ Ex. vi. 2, 3.

⁵ Gen. viii. 20.—Gen. xii. 7, 8.

⁶ Gen. xxii. 14.

⁷ Gen. xxviii. 13.

* This is not obvious in the English version, from the name JEHOVAH being generally rendered the LORD, or Gon; but, when so rendered, it is printed in capital letters; and, by this mark, we may trace the incommunicable name, in almost every page of Genesis.

Commentators, therefore, conclude, that the clause should be read with an interrogation, thus, ‘ By my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them ?’ Or else, that though the name itself had been revealed to the patriarchs, its *meaning* had not been fully revealed, nor had it been substantiated by the fulfilment of the promises which it guaranteed.

By the name of JEHOVAH, then, or I AM THAT I AM, we are to understand the eternity, unchangeableness, and independence of God ; we are called to view him as the only Being who possesses an undervived existenee ; and consequently, as the only Source of existence to all other beings : as God, ‘ from everlasting to everlasting ;’¹ as ‘ Alpha and Omega, the first and the last ;’² as him who says of himself, ‘ Yea, before the day was, I am he ; and there is none that ean deliver out of my hand : I will work, and who shall let it ?’³

How are we lost in wonder when we attempt to look into the unfathomable depths of this mysterious name, to traee the original and uncreated Souree of all being ! No attribute of the infinite God baffles so completely the comprehension of our finite minds, as his duration from all eternity. The attempt to realize eternity to come, fatigues and stretches our limited powers ; but when we would look baek to eternity past, how are those powers overwhelmed ! We use the words indeed ; but we have actuallly no ideas corresponding to them.

‘ If we would look back, we ean reaeli no further than the beginning of the creation, and aecount the years from the first foundation of the world ; but, after that, we must lose ourselves in the abyss of eternity ; we have no clue to guide our thoughts ; we ean see no bounds to thy eternity.’⁴

¹ Ps. xc 2

² Rev. i. 11.

³ Is. xlvi. 13.

⁴ Charnock.

Our chief concern with the sacred name, however, is not to dive into its unsearchable mysteries, but to inquire into its bearing upon our own situation and prospects. For, since JEHOVAH is the Source of being to all, we must owe our being to him ; since he alone is independent, we must depend upon him for all things in time and in eternity. ‘ In him we live, and move, and have our being.’¹ As he bestowed life upon us, or we had never been ; so he preserves that life during his pleasure ; and at his word the dust returns to the earth as it was ; and the spirit returns unto God who gave it.² Our being, once begun, can never end. Though we are ‘ but of yesterday,’ and, as to this mortal existence, may be cut off before to-morrow ; yet we are immortal : and whether immortality be to each of us a blessing or a curse, depends entirely upon the relation in which we stand to JEHOVAH.

‘ Therefore, let us provide for a happy interest in the eternity of God. Man is made for an eternal state. ‘ The soul hath such a perfection in its nature, that it is ‘ fit for eternity, and cannot display all its operations ‘ but in eternity. To an eternity it must go, and live ‘ as long as God himself lives. Things of a short duration are not proportioned to a soul made for an eternal ‘ continuance ; to see that it be a comfortable eternity is ‘ worth all our care.’³

In unfallen creatures, like the angels in heaven, no emotions may arise in contemplating God’s eternity and immutability, and their own immortality and dependence upon him, but those of grateful adoring love and rapturous delight. But, in a fallen creature, like man, if he be at all sensible of his own character and state, and of the holiness and justice of God, this contemplation must awaken fearful apprehensions, if not certain fore-

¹ Acts xvii. 28.

² Ecc. xii. 7.

³ Charnock.

bodings of evil. For what must be the consequence to a sinner, of God's immutability and eternity, but the infallible fulfilment of all his dreadful threatenings, the everlasting duration of his Almighty vengeance!

Had the name JEHOVAH been revealed, in connexion with the divine attributes of justice and holiness, but unconnected with that of covenanted mercy, we could have viewed it in no other light than as JEHOVAH, our terrible Judge—JEHOVAH, our eternal Tormentor. But, blessed be God, he has revealed his holy name under far different aspects, so as to enable us sinners to contemplate it, not only without despair, but with strong confidence and lively hope.

When the name JEHOVAH was so solemnly announced to Moses, it was not to confirm threats of deserved vengeance, but to confirm promises of covenanted mercy and deliverance: and, trusting in this covenant, the faithful servants of God often commemorated his goodness to themselves individually, or to their nation, by joining to the name JEHOVAH, some word expressive of the particular deliverance vouchsafed. Thus Abraham called the spot where he received his beloved Isaac from the dead, and where God provided himself with a lamb, JEHOVAH-jireh, *the Lord will see, or provide, the Lord will be seen or manifested.*¹ Thus Moses called the altar, which he built to commemorate the victory over Amalek, JEHOVAH-nissi, *the Lord my banner.*² Thus Gideon, on receiving gracious tokens of the divine presence and favour, built an altar, and called it JEHOVAH-shalom, *the Lord send peace.*³ A blessed combination of this awful name was revealed by God himself to the prophet Jeremiah, JEHOVAH-tsidkenu, *the Lord our Righteousness;*⁴

¹ Gen. xxii. 14.

² Ex. xvii. 15.

³ Judges vi. 24.

⁴ Jer. xxiii. 6.

and to Ezekiel, another delightful combination was revealed, JEHOVAH-shamma, *the Lord is there.*¹ ‘The name of the city (doubtless the holy city, the church), from that day forth shall be, *The Lord is there.*’

But of all combinations of the sacred name, none is so precious to sinners as that contained in the name *Jesus*, which literally signifies JEHOVAH-salvation. Yes, when we might justly have feared that the Lord would reveal himself to fallen man, as JEHOVAH-destruction, lo ! he assumes the blessed title of JEHOVAH-salvation : and as surely as the name I AM THAT I AM, certified to Israel the performance of the covenant made with Abraham, in their deliverance from bondage, and inheritance of Canaan ; so surely does the name *Jesus* certify to the spiritual Israel the performance of the *better* covenant, in their deliverance from sin and Satan, and their everlasting inheritance in heaven.

‘ If God be eternal, his covenant will be so. If God be eternal, he being our God in covenant, is an eternal good and possession. “ This God is our God for ever and ever,”² He is a dwelling-place in all generations. ‘ We shall traverse the world a while, and then arrive at the blessings Jacob wished for Joseph, the blessings of the everlasting hills.³ The enjoyment of God will be as fresh and glorious, after many ages, as it was at first. ‘ The fulness of joy will be always present ; without past to be thought of with regret for being gone ; without future to be expected, with tormenting desires.’⁴

The title JEHOVAH-salvation, was first made known in the typical name of Joshua, who, as we shall afterwards see, was an eminent type of the divine Saviour. In the book of Isaiah, the sacred name of JEHOVAH is frequently conjoined with that of Saviour and Redeemer, as in the

¹ Ezek. xlviii. 35. ² Ps. xlviii. 14. ³ Gen. xlix. 26. ⁴ Charnock.

following passages;—‘ I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy *Saviour*;’¹—‘ thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his *Redeemer*, the Lord of Hosts.’²

The name *Jesus*, given by Revelation to the infant Saviour, proclaimed him to the world as the *self-existent God*. The same blessed truth was declared by Jesus himself, when, in answer to the evils of the Jews, he solemnly averred, ‘ Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM.’³ However modern infidels may pretend to misunderstand the claim made in these words to *eternal self-existence*, it was clearly understood by the Jews; for they took up stones to cast at Jesus, in abhorrence of what they deemed blasphemy.

In the Apostolie epistles, though the name I AM, or JEHOVAH, is not directly applied to Jesus Christ, such things are written of him as can be applied to none but the eternal and immutable God. He is declared to be ‘ *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*;’⁴ to have ‘ *an unchangeable priesthood*;’⁵ and, in Revelation to the beloved John, he himself declares, ‘ *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending*, saith the Lord, *which is, and which was, and which is to come*.’⁶ ‘ This implies that he is the First Cause, and the Last End, the author and finisher of all things in creation, provider, and grace; the beginning and the ending; the source of existence, of life, of holiness, and of felicity, and the completion of them in every sense, and in all respects.’⁷

We have, therefore, ample warrant from Scripture to conclude that *Jesus is JEHOVAH*: and that, therefore, he *may* have been that person in the saered Trinity who

¹ Is. xlivi. 3. ² Is. xliv. 6. ³ John viii. 58, 59. ⁴ Heb. xiii. 8.

⁵ Heb. vii. 24. ⁶ Rev. i. 8. ⁷ Scott.

appeared to Moses in the bush, and to so many of the patriarchs. Future opportunities will occur to state our grounds for concluding that he *was* that person. Meantime we simply remark, that, as the name JEHOVAH belongs to Jesus, so do all the combinations of the name. He is JEHOVAH-*jireh*; for in him the LORD *has been seen or manifested* to mankind, and in him the LORD *provided himself with a Lamb for a burnt-offering*, and *provides* for his people every good thing. Through him alone the LORD *sends peace*; he is the LORD our *Righteousness*; the LORD our *Banner*; and in him alone, our Immanuel, the LORD is in the city, the church, and in every true member thereof.

‘ As the eternity of God is the ground of all religion, ‘ so the eternity of Christ is the ground of the Christian ‘ religion. Could our sins be perfectly expiated, had he ‘ not an eternal divinity to answer for the offences com- ‘ mitted against an eternal God? Temporary sufferings ‘ had been of little validity, without an infiniteness and ‘ eternity in his person to add weight to his pas- ‘ sion.’¹

What a rich fund of comfort and joy is here laid up for believers! He who so loved them as to give himself for them, is unchangeable in his love, as well as in his being. In Christ, the *mercy* of the LORD is ‘ from everlasting to everlasting;’ for ‘ our Redeemer from everlasting is his name;’² and he ‘ ever liveth to make intercession for us.’³

With strong confidence, then, may every believer adopt the exulting strain of the prophet, ‘ Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.’⁴

¹ Charnock. ² Is. lxiii. 16. ³ Heb. vii. 25. ⁴ Is. xii. 2.

‘ Let the righteous be glad : let them rejoice before God ; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.’ ‘ Let them extol him that rideth upon the heavens, by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.’

ESSAY II.

JEHOVAH SABAOTH, OR, LORD OF HOSTS.

THE august title now before us, might have been suitably classed among the combinations of the incommutable Name, considered in the foregoing essay. Its meaning, however, is so sublime and comprehensive as to claim a separate and more minute study.

It signifies GOD of armies ; and expresses the universal dominion of JEHOVAH over all his creatures. ‘ He doeth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ?’¹

The hosts of the LORD are as various as the orders of creatures which he has formed. We find an enumeration of them in the 148th Psalm ; beginning with the heavenly hosts, which are of two kinds ; the angels, ministering in the invisible heavens, and the bright lunninaries shining in the material heavens. Both of these are emphatically termed God’s host ; the former being the highest order of intelligent creatures ; the latter the most glorious of inanimate bodies. Of the angels it is said, that ‘ they excel in strength, that they do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word :’² ‘ that thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him.’³ Of the starry

¹ Dan. iv. 35.

² Ps. ciii. 20.

³ Dan. vii. 10.

host it is said, God ‘ bringeth out their host by number : he ealleth them all by names ; by the greatness of his might not one of them faileth.’

But to return to the 148th Psalm, the sacred writer does not there confine his view to the heavenly hosts. He descends at once from the heights of heaven to the depths of earth and sea, and in them also finds the hosts of JEHOVAH.

Even in the atmospheric regions, between heaven and earth, he discovers another division of this grand army, viz. ‘ fire and hail ; snow and vapour ; stormy wind fulfilling his word.’ The pious Psalmist does not speak of these agents, as we are too apt to speak, as if they were the army of chance ; but acknowledges them to be the messengers and servants of God.

He then turns to examine the wondrous world which we inhabit, and in every part of it recognizes the hosts of JEHOVAH ; in the mountains, with their mineral treasures ; in the fruitful trees, and all the vast variety of vegetable life ; in the still more wonderful variety of animal tribes ; and, lastly, in the noblest of God’s earthly hosts—mankind. Of this race, he summons to the standard of the LORD, not only kings, princes, and judges, but all people : young men and maidens, old men and children, have each their peculiar station assigned them in the host of JEHOVAH.

All people, whether individuals or nations, are, in a certain sense, God’s hosts ; they can do nothing but what he pleases, and according to his over-ruling Providence. They are, however, for the most part, unconscious and involuntary agents in the service of the LORD. Like the Assyrian monarch, they ‘ mean not so,’ but think only of pursuing their own selfish ends. But there is one class of men who willingly and intelligently join the

hosts of the Lord : these are his saints, his true Israel, ‘a people near unto him ;’ and to them, in conclusion, the Psalmist appeals, to unite with him in the praise and service of JEHOVAH.

This title is generally made use of in Scripture, either to confirm the security of the people of God, or to declare the ruin of his enemies ; to encourage the former, or to intimidate the latter, or both at once ; as in the following passage,—‘ Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together : and all that took them captives, held them fast ; they refused to let them go. Their Redeemer is strong ; the LORD of Hosts is his name : He shall throughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.’¹ It is, then, ‘the LORD of Hosts that mustereth the host of the battle,’² to defend his own people, and to destroy his and their enemies. And how truly he acted up to this title, the history of ancient Israel abundantly proves. To encourage the father of that nation, in an hour of perplexity and danger, two hosts of angels met him, of whom he said, ‘This is God’s host.’³ But, to prove that, when commanded by JEHOVAH, all hosts are invincible, he employed, in the deliverance of his people from bondage, hosts, not of men or of angels, but of creeping things, of frogs, locusts, &c.

For this favoured race, the hosts of inanimate nature were also engaged. The sea opened them a passage through its depths, and then closed to destroy their enemies ; the skies rained down bread for them ; the sun stood still till their victory was completed ; ‘the stars in their courses fought for Israel.’ In all conflicts with their enemies, the success or defeat of Israel depended entirely

¹ Jer. i. 33, 34.

² Is. xiii. 4.

³ Gen. xxxii. 2.

on the favour or displeasure of the God of armies. When ‘the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel,’ they were unconquerable; but, when he was wroth, ‘he delivered the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.’

Of David it is said, ‘he waxed greater and greater, for the Lord of Hosts was with him.’

Many of the prophets were honoured with splendid visions of the Lord’s heavenly hosts. Elisha, when surrounded by the enemy’s host of horses and chariots, had his eyes opened to behold a far mightier host engaged in his defence, even horses and chariots of fire, filling the mountain.¹

Micah ‘saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.’²

Isaiah had a glorious vision of the KING, the LORD of Hosts, when his train of heavenly ministers filled the temple, and made the posts move with their acclamations.³

But we must proceed to the main object of this Essay, which is to prove, from Scripture, that the title LORD OF HOSTS, belongs to Jesus Christ our Lord; that, ‘as for our Redeemer, the LORD of Hosts is his name.’⁴ This truth we would deduce, not so much from texts like the one last quoted, where the titles ‘REDEEMER,’ and ‘LORD OF HOSTS,’ are identified with each other; because these may be said to refer to temporal redemption, as primarily they did. But we have stronger proofs in many parts of Scripture, where actions and officees are ascribed to the LORD of Hosts, which we know to be actions and officees peculiar to Christ our Lord. Isaiah, for example, exhorts the people to sanctify the LORD of Hosts himself, to let him be their fear and their

¹ 2 Kings vi. 17. ² 1 Kings xxii. 19. ³ Is. vi. 1-4. ⁴ Is. xlvi. 4.

dread; for this reason, because he should be to them either a sanctuary, or a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.¹ Now, the application of this passage, made by Christ and his Apostles, in the New Testament, plainly shows whom they understood by the **LORD** of Hosts himself.²

Again, in Isaiah 54th, the **LORD** of Hosts declares himself the *Husband* of the church; and we know that this relation belongs peculiarly to God the Son. In the 24th Psalm, a scene is represented which can be none other than the ascension of the risen Saviour: and under what title is he received and welcomed by the blessed inhabitants of heaven? It is as ‘*the LORD of Hosts, the LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.*’

But perhaps the most unequivocal proof of the right application of this title to the Saviour, is that contained in Zech. xiii. 7, ‘Awake, O sword, against my *Shepherd*, and against *the Man* that is my fellow, saith the **LORD of Hosts.**’ This prophecy was distinctly applied to himself, by the Lord Jesus, the same night on which he was betrayed. There can therefore be no reasonable doubt, but that the blessed ‘Man’ Christ Jesus, who for us was ‘smitten’ with the awful ‘sword’ of Divine justice, was the ‘fellow,’ the companion, equal, and eompeer of the ‘**LORD of Hosts;**’ and consequently, that he is, and ever was, ‘**the LORD of Hosts himself.**’

This conclusion is warranted by the authority of an evangelist. Speaking of his divine Master, John implies that *he* was the **LORD of Hosts** seen by Isaiah in the temple; for he says, ‘These things spake Esaias, when he saw *his* glory, and spake of *him.*’³

¹ Is. viii. 13, 14. ² Luke ii. 34.—Rom. ix. 33.—1 Pet. ii. 8.

³ John xii. 41.

It did not consist with the Redeemer's state of humiliation, openly to assume the dignity of **LORD** of Hosts : yet tokens of this dignity appeared on many occasions, during his earthly sojourn. The angelic host were ever ready to attend him : a multitude of them hailed his birth ; they came and ministered to him, after his temptation in the wilderness ; one was sent to strengthen him in his agony in the garden ; and when he submitted to be laid hands on and taken by wicked men, the words of Jesus testified that this submission proceeded from no lack of heavenly aid : ‘ Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels ? ’

Whenever he was pleased to exert his dominion, all nature confessed Jesus to be **LORD** of Hosts. The unstable waves became for him a firm path-way ; the raging tempest, at his word, lulled itself into peace ; the fish of the sea brought him tribute ; the provisions of men in his hands, multiplied to any extent he pleased ; the diseases of men, yea, death itself, yielded to his sway ; even the hosts of hell were forced to render to him reluctant homage.

The host of the visible heavens were not wanting in tokens of reverence to their incarnate Lord. At his birth, a new star pointed out his humble dwelling ; and during his agony on the cross, the sun and moon withdrew their light, as if to show sympathy with their Creator, or horror at the deed of his rebellious creatures. The earth itself quaked, and the rocks rent, when the Lord of heaven and earth gave up the ghost. Could the object of this universal homage, then, we ask, be any other than the **LORD** of Hosts ?

Again, when Jesus rose and left the tomb, angels kept guard over it, till they had announced his resurrection to

the sorrowing disceiples ; and when he was parted from them, to aseend np where he was before, two heavenly messengers stood by the astonished disceiples, and announced his second eoming in like manner as they had seen him go into heaven.

The heavenly host then weleomed him as their Lord, by a new and peeuliar right. For to him, as Man and Mediator, angels and authorities and powers were made subjeet.¹ As the Lamb, he reeives their most rapturous adorations. As the Word of God, clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, he commands the armies of heaven.²

To every man who at all enters into the meaning of this stupendous name, it must appear a matter of immense importanee, to have the **LORD** of Hosts for his friend, and not for his enemy. Now, there is no possible way in whieh a sinner can stand in a friendly relation to the **LORD** of Hosts, except by union with the ‘ Man’ that is his ‘ Fellow.’ It is of God in Christ only, that any ean truly say, ‘ The **LORD** of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our Refuge.’ United to Christ by living faith, we have JEHOVAH of Hosts for our Sanetuary, our Shepherd, our Husband, our Protector.

Nay, by this union also, we are admitted to the astonishing privilege of fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. For, beeause he who had been from all eternity the ‘ Fellow’ of the **LORD** of Hosts, became in time the Fellow of Man, therefore is man restored to the privilege and eapaeity of fellowship with God. This privilege so far exeeeds our natural eoneeptions, it is so infinitely superior, nay, so directly contrary, to our deserts, that we might be tempted to doubt the possibility of enjoying it, were it not deelared as the actual experiencee of inspired Christians. One apostle affirms,

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 22.

² Rev. xix. 13, 14.

‘Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.’¹ Another, when he would draw motives for obedience from the most incontrovertible truths, says, ‘If there be any fellowship of the Spirit.’²

The meaning of the word ‘fellowship’ is twofold. It signifies both mutual converse, and mutual operation. In both of these senses, believers enjoy fellowship with the Lord of Hosts, through Christ. They have sweet communion of soul with him ; and they are workers together with him, in promoting his glory, and the salvation of men. Yes, if we know what it is to have the Lord of Hosts for our Friend, we shall not only rejoice in the assurance that he will, if needful, summon to our help the varied powers under his command ; but we shall ourselves desire to form part of his victorious host, to ‘come to the help of the Lord against the mighty.’

Be it our holy ambition, then, to be found in the ranks of God’s faithful host on earth, until he remove us to join his triumphant and adoring hosts above, there to cry, with unalloyed delight and sinless sincerity, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.’

‘And blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou, even thou, art Lord alone : thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all ; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.’³

¹ 1 John i. 3.

² Philipp. ii. 1.

³ Nehem. ix. 5, 6.

ESSAY III.

THE LORD, OR ADONAI.

WE have seen in the foregoing essays that the word **LORD**, as we find it in the English Bible in capital letters, is the translation of the ineomminieable name JEHOVAH ; and this is its most frequent form in the Old Testament. But we find it there also in small letters, the *Lord* ; and when so printed, it is the translation of another Hebrew word, *Adonai*, whieh signifies a *Ruler* or *Disposer*, a *Basis* or *Support*, a *Sustainer*.

This name is not so strictly ineomminieable as that of JEHOVAH ; being sometimes given to men or angels : yet it is so identified with that name, in the Old Testament, as to leave no doubt of their belonging to the same infinite and Divine Being. We rarely find the name *Lord*, except in eonjunetion with the name **GOD** : and when so joined, the latter is always in capitals, denoting JEHOVAH in the original : as the Lord our God (Adonai JEHOVAH), GOD the Lord (JEHOVAH Adonai). Sometimes the name **Lord** is rendered still more glorious, by the addition of all the peculiar appellations of Deity.

In Amos iii. 13, we find it written thus—‘ The Lord God, the God of Hosts (Adonai Jehovah, Elohi Tsebaoth).’

As the two names, Adonai and JEHOVAH, are closely connected in the letter, so they are also in the spirit ; for

He who is the only independent Source of existence to all worlds, must of necessity be the Governor and Support of all : He who governs and supports all, can be none other than He that exists. There is in the 8th Psalm a beautiful illustration of the two names, both of which are in our version rendered Lord. ‘ O LORD our Lord,’ (or, ‘ O Jehovah our Ruler, our Sustainer,’) ‘ how excellent is thy name in all the earth ! ’

In the 110th Psalm, also, these two names come in close contact : ‘ The LORD said unto my Lord,’ or, JEHOVAH said unto my Ruler, ‘ Sit thou on my right hand,’ &c. When the name Lord is found by itself in the Old Testament, it is almost always in acts of worship ; as in the prayer of Moses, ‘ O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us.’ In that of Daniel, ‘ O Lord, hear ; O Lord, forgive.’ Its propriety used in this act is very evident, expressing the submission and dependence of the creature towards its Creator.

We may then understand by the title *Lord*, as applied to the Divine Being, the Almighty *Ruler* and *Governor*, the everlasting *Basis* and *Sustainer*, and the *Hearer of prayer*.

In the New Testament, the name Lord is applied almost exclusively to our Saviour Jesus Christ. But as this name is sometimes given to men, does its application to Jesus Christ, it may be asked, prove him to be divine ? Yes ; for it is so applied to him, as it could not, without idolatry, be applied to any creature ; even in the senses above given, as the Almighty Ruler and Support, and as the Hearer of prayer.

But, - before proceeding to the study of this title, as used in the New Testament, let us gather from the Old, some proofs of its right application to the Lord Christ, in his character of Mediator. In Isaiah iv. 4 (one of

the few places where we find the name Lord unconnected with that of JEHOVAH, and yet not used in prayer), the office predicted of *Adonai* is, that he shall *wash away the sins of Zion*. In Malachi iii. 1 (another instance of the separate use of the term), the Lord is predicted as suddenly to come to *his* temple, even the *Messenger of the Covenant*. This prediction, we know, was fulfilled when Jesus, the Messenger of the covenant of grace, glorified the second temple by his personal presence, and virtually claimed it as his own. Then, in Isaiah xl. 10, 11, the Lord GOD is he who was to come with strong hand, and feed his flock like a *shepherd*,—to gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently to lead those that were with young.

But the most remarkable passage in ancient prophecy in which the title Lord is unequivocally ascribed to Messiah, and its meaning illustrated, is the 110th Psalm. In this grand Psalm, JEHOVAH addresses One whom David acknowledges as his Lord, in these words,—‘ Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.’ Then follows a description of the reign to be enjoyed by this Lord ; and it is universal and everlasting ; beginning at Zion, but going forth over all lands, and all kings. All people must submit to him, either willingly, or by constraint ; all his enemies must be destroyed. And what renders the government of this Lord most peculiar, is its union with an everlasting priesthood. An obscure intimation is also given in the concluding verse, ‘ He shall drink of the brook in the way : therefore shall he lift up his head,’ that the Lord referred to must drink of the waters of affliction, or should need the waters of comfort, in his way to glory. We are not left to our own conjectures regarding the Lord here spoken of. By the lips of the Anointed himself, *he* is declared to

be the person of whom David spake, and spake ‘ by the Holy Ghost.’ And, combining this declaration of his sovereignty over David, a thousand years before he appeared on earth, with other Scriptures which declared him to be the Son of David, he led the Jews to a conclusion, which, but for their inveterate unbelief, must have been irresistible ; namely, that their expected Messiah was God and man in one person ; the Son of David after the flesh, and yet the Son of God by eternal power and Godhead ; and as Mediator appointed by the Father to universal dominion.¹ And not only did Jesus prove, from ancient prophecy, that the title Lord belonged to Messiah : he distinctly claimed and welcomed that title in his own person, in such a way as it could not, without blasphemy, have been claimed by any mere man, even in the senses above given, as the supreme *Ruler* or *Disposer*, the eternal *Basis* or *Support*, and the *Hearer of prayer*. In the first of these senses, as the supreme *Ruler*, Jesus claimed the title ; saying to his apostles, ‘ Ye call me Master and Lord : and ye say well ; for so I am.’² And that he claimed it in a far higher sense than it could be claimed by an earthly teacher or leader, is evident ; for he forbade the apostles to be called *Rabbi*, or *Master*, because One was their *Master*, even Christ, as One was their *Father* in Heaven.³ Indeed, Jesus styled himself *Lord* of all men, as their *Ruler* and *Law-giver* in this life, and as the *Sovereign Disposer* of their eternal destinies ; saying, ‘ Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say ?’⁴ and ‘ Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name ?’ &c., ‘ and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’⁵

¹ Mat. xxii. 41–45.

² John xiii. 13.

³ Mat. xxviii. 7–10.

⁴ Luke vi. 46.

⁵ Mat. vii. 22–23.

As the eternal *Basis* or *Support* of his church, Jesus claimed the title Adonai, in his memorable answer to Peter's acknowledgment of his Messiahship and Sonship : ‘Upon this Rock I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’¹

As the *Hearer of prayer*, also, the Son of Man received and welcomed the name Lord. The woman of Canaan came and ‘worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.’² Many similar instances might be adduced ; but the most decisive is the adoring exclamation of Thomas, ‘My Lord, and my God.’³

After his death, resurrection, and ascension, this glorious title belonged to the Saviour by a new and peculiar right. This was declared by Peter to his countrymen, on the day of Pentecost : ‘Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath *made* that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.’⁴ And the same truth is declared by Paul to the Philippians. It was *because* he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that God highly exalted him, and issued the decree, ‘That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father.’⁵ ‘To this end,’ says St Paul, in another place, ‘Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living ;’⁶ that in human nature he might be the sovereign Lord of all his people, both during their lives and after their death.

The apostles seem to delight in ascribing this title to their glorified Master, in every possible form and ampli-

¹ Mat. xvi. 18.

² Mat. xv. 25.

³ John xx. 28.

⁴ Acts ii. 36.

⁵ Phillip. ii. 8-11.

⁶ Rom. xiv. 9.

fication. They style him, ‘*Lord of all*,’¹—the sovereign Lord of his redeemed people, and of all things for their benefit; ‘*The Lord from heaven*,’² JEHOVAH, God in human nature; ‘*the Lord of glory*,’³ that divine person, who even when he hung upon the cross, was the Lord and ‘King of glory;’ ‘*Lord of lords*,’⁴ to whom all kings of the earth must submit, or be destroyed by him; the ‘*One Lord*,’⁵ in opposition to the ‘lords many’ of the heathen. ‘To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.’ On this passage Scott remarks, ‘The one God, ‘even the Father, signifies the Godhead, as the sole object of all religious worship: and the Lord Jesus Christ ‘denotes the person of Immanuel, God manifest in the flesh, one with the Father, and one with us, the appointed Mediator and Lord of all; through whom we ‘come to the Father, and through whom the Father ‘communicates all blessings to us, by the operations of ‘the Holy Spirit. So that this passage proves, that ‘Christ the Mediator is the object of our worship, as ‘one with the Father and the Spirit, in the unity of the ‘Godhead, and as opposed to all others to whom divine ‘adoration was rendered, or by whom it was claimed: ‘or to whom it has since been abundantly and idolatrously rendered by professed Christians. “For thou ‘only art holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only, ‘O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the ‘glory of God the Father.”⁶

As the eternal *Basis* or *Sustainer*, also, the Lord Jesus is set forth in the Apostolic Epistles; as in Colossians, i. 16, 17, where it is declared that ‘all things were creat-

¹ Acts x. 36.

² 1 Cor. xv. 47.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 8.

⁴ Rev. xix. 16.

⁵ 1 Cor. viii. 6.

⁶ Communion Service.

ed by him and for him,' and that 'by him all things consist' (or are preserved) : and in Hebrews i. 3, where he is said to uphold all things by the word of his power.

That the early Christians habitually *addressed prayer* to the ascended Saviour is evident, from this being one of the signs whereby St. Paul distinguished the brethren ; 'with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.'¹ To the Lord Jesus Christ, in union with the Father, Paul prayed for grace and peace to his converts.² And to this one Lord, the Apostles devoted their whole powers of body and mind, their warmest affections and most zealous labours ; deeming it their highest honour to serve the Lord Christ.

To some readers it may appear lost labour, to insist so much upon a truth acknowledged by all professing Christians, that Jesus Christ is Lord. But let us remember the awful affirmation of St. Paul, 'That no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.'³ It does not indeed require the teaching of the Holy Ghost to acquiesce in this truth with the understanding, and to profess it with the mouth. For many thus call Christ Lord, Lord, who do not the things which he says ; and who, continuing in their present state, must hereafter hear the dreadful sentence, 'I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity.'⁴

But no man can with true faith say that Jesus is the Lord, and with cordial devotion submit to him as his own Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

We have seen that to 'call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord' was one of the distinctive marks of believers, in the early ages of the church. And it is so still. For, while unconverted men are willing to ac-

¹ 1 Cor. i. 2.

² Gal. i. 3, &c.

³ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

⁴ Mat. vii. 21-23.

knowledge, in their own way, the sovereignty of God the Father ; and feel it no derogation to their dignity to offer to him a formal homage and worship : they are reluctant, nay averse, to bow to ‘ the man, Christ Jesus ;’ and secretly, if not openly, they deny his equal right to divine honour and worship. Then, as to his claim over their services, for promoting his cause in the world, nothing is farther from their thoughts : they leave that to a set of *well-meaning*, but *weak-minded* men, who have nothing better to do. For their part, they are engrossed in more substantial eoneerns, and more important duties ; they feel no obligation to serve the Lord Christ.

Are we then willing to choose Jesus Christ for our Lord and Master ; to beeome his devoted servants and adoring worshippers ? If so, the Holy Ghost has made us ‘ willing, in the day of his power.’¹ The most consistent servants of Christ must indeed eonfess with shame, ‘ O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us.’ But this is their grief and burden. They entreat the Lord Jesus to remove all remaining rebellion from their hearts, to expel thence every thing that would presume to rival him ; to assert his double right, by creation, and by purchase, to the whole of their time, their talents, their influence, their substance, their affections : in short, to their ‘ bodies and spirits, which are his.’ It is their great business and delight to call upon his name, to eonfess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, and to serve him as their Master in heaven.

They may well rejoice in serving such a Master ; knowing him to be the Almighty *Disposer* of all events, the eternal *Basis* of every well-grounded hope, the bountiful Benefactor of his followers. He may indeed require

¹ Ps. ex. 3.

them to be ‘as their Master,’ in poverty, reproach, and suffering; but, if true disciples, they will contentedly receive this portion; confidently expecting a better time, when they shall be ‘as their Master,’ in holiness and bliss, and be invited to enter into the joy of their Lord.

ESSAY IV.

GOD.

THE word God is Saxon, and simply means *Good*. When printed in capital letters in our Bibles, it is, as we formerly remarked, the translation of the name JEHOVAH. But when the first letter only is a capital, it is the rendering of one of the Hebrew words El or Elohim, the former being singular, the latter plural.

Without entering into arguments for the doctrine of the Trinity, which the reader is supposed undoubtfully to believe, we would take this opportunity of observing, that the plural substantive *Elohim* being used with verbs and pronouns in the singular, to denote the one God, implies a plurality of Persons in the Godhead, and is equivalent to ‘the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’¹

These words, El and Elohim, are also applied to the false gods of the heathen. But whenever so applied in Scripture, great care is taken to distinguish these from the One JEHOVAH, by epithets of contempt or abhorrence: as, ‘The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.’² ‘Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods?’³

The word gods (or Elohim), is also used in Scripture

¹ Mat. xxviii. 19.

² Jer. x. 11.

³ Jer. ii. 11.

for rulers or magistrates. But in this case there is always some intimation of the inferior sense in which the word is used; such as, ‘I have said Ye are gods (speaking of magistrates); but ye shall die like men.’¹ ‘Thou shalt not revile the *gods*, nor curse the ruler of thy people.’²

Having proved that our Lord Jesus Christ is JEHOVAH, and LORD of Hosts, it is unnecessary to enter upon lengthened proofs that he is God: for, ‘Who is God save Jehovah?’³ Himself replies, ‘I am Jehovah, and there is none else; there is no God besides me.’⁴ For the further strengthening of our faith, however, it will be proper to adduce some evidence of the direct application of this name to our blessed Redeemer.

The evidence of the Old and New Testaments combined, leaves no room for doubt in the unprejudiced mind. For the prophets certainly spake of the coming Messiah as God: Jesus certainly proved himself Messiah; therefore Jesus must be God. Let us notice a few passages in ancient prophecy where Messiah is styled God. In Isaiah xl., where Messiah’s forerunner receives his commission, what is that commission? ‘Make straight in the desert a highway for *our God*;’ ‘say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your *God*!’ Then in the xxxvth of Isaiah, where a time remarkable for miraculous healing was predicted, which the Jews well knew was the time of their Messiah; Who was it that was to come with vengeance, with a recompence, to come and save them? It was *their God*. Again, in the xlvth chapter of this book, Who invites all the ends of the earth to look unto him, and be saved? It is the One *God*.

Now, we know that the way of Jesus was prepared by John the Baptist exactly in the manner foretold by

¹ Ps. lxxxii. 6.

² Exod. xxii. 28.

³ Ps. xviii. 31.

⁴ Is. xlv. 5.

the prophet : we know that he opened the eyes of the blind, and unstopped the deaf ears ; we know he invited all men to look unto him and be saved ; therefore he could be none other than the *Saviour-God*, whose coming was foretold by the prophets.

The New Testament furnishes still stronger and more direct proofs, that the name of God belongs to Jesus in the highest and truest sense. He himself claimed this name so decidedly, that the Jews charged him with blasphemy, for making himself *equal with God* ;¹ for that he, being a man, *made himself God*.² And did he attempt to repel the charge, or to explain away his claims ? On the contrary, he confirmed them ; by asserting his Almighty power, and his Oneness with the Father. In the writings of the Apostles, we find many distinct applications of the name God to their risen and glorified Master ; and generally accompanied by some essential attribute of divinity : John styles him, ‘ the *true God* ;³ Paul calls him ‘ the *great God* and our *Saviour* ;’⁴ ‘ God over all, blessed for ever.’⁵ And, in proof of the true deity of his Lord, he adduced the testimony of the Father himself, whom he represents as commanding all the angels to worship his only-begotten Son, and addressing him in these words, ‘ Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.’⁶

The nature and perfections of the Godhead, and the existence of those perfections in our Redeemer, is, however, too vast a subject to be comprehended in a single view. We shall therefore divide the view, by taking separately the principal attributes which describe to us the being and character of God ; and proving each to belong to our blessed Saviour. These attributes belong

¹ John v. 18.

² John x. 33.

³ 1 John v. 20.

⁴ Tit. ii. 13.

⁵ Rom. ix. 4.

⁶ Heb. i. 6-13.

as truly to the divine titles already considered, *viz.* Jehovah, Lord, and Lord of Hosts; but the name God being in more constant use with us than any other title of Deity, and being less definite in its meaning than the foregoing names, we have reserved for it those attributes which distinguish the Most High, and render him the Object of reverential fear, adoration, and love, to all holy beings.

The remainder of this Essay then, shall be divided into the following sections :—

1st, On God's Omnipotence ; *2d*, His Omnipresence and Omniscience ; *3d*, His Wisdom ; *4th*, His Holiness ; *5th*, His Justice ; *6th*, His Goodness ; and *7th*, His Faithfulness and Truth.

All these perfections, we know, exist in infinite fulness in the incomprehensible God ; besides those of Eternity, Self-existence, Immutability, and universal Dominion, which have been studied in the foregoing essays. If then we can prove the existence of all these perfections in Christ Jesus, we have the clearest demonstration that he is ‘ true and very God.’

SECT. I.—THE ALMIGHTY, OR THE MIGHTY GOD.

FIRST then, let us study with humble reverence, the name ALMIGHTY or ALL-SUFFICIENT. But how does it overwhelm our puny faculties to attempt one realizing thought of Omnipotence ! Whether we turn our eyes to the displays of this perfection, in the works of Creation, of Providence, or of Grace, we are equally lost in amaze-

ment. If we look at *Creation*, and remember that the formation of a single particle of matter, out of nothing, is equally beyond the power of the human hand, and the comprehension of the human understanding; what shall we say of that infinite power, whieh spake into being the innumerable varieties of material things, in all their forms, substanees, combinations, and mutual relations? And when, from the creation of matter, we turn to that of mind, and think on the wondrous faculties of the human soul, and the still more wondrous faculties of angelic spirits, all given by ‘the inspiration of the Almighty,’ are we not forced to ery out in humble admiration, ‘Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.’¹ He it is who ‘stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.’²

No where in Scripture do we find more beautiful acknowledgements of the power of the Almighty than in the Book of Job: we may well blush, while reading them, at our own dulness and inattention, in not magnifying God’s work, whieh every man may see and behold afar off.³

When from the consideration of God’s works of Creation, we turn to his works of *Providence*, Omnipotence appears in a form no less wonderful and overwhelming. This transition was familiar to the minds of the sacred writers. The Psalmist, after extolling the power of the Almighty, in creating the heavens and the earth, the sun, moon, and stars, proeceeds to extol the same power, in his dealings with Israel; in his smiting the first born of Egypt, and bringing Israel out from among them with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm; in his dividing the Red Sea, to open a passage for Israel, and

¹ Job xxxvii. 23.

² Zech. xii. 1.

³ Job xxxvi. 24, 25.

then overthrowing Pharaoh and his host in the depths of that sea ; and in all the wonders he wrought for them in their progress to Canaan, their promised heritage.¹

The providential care exerted in behalf of Israel, was a type of the same care exerted over the true people of God in all ages. But this does not include all the wonders of Omnipotent Providence. All mankind, all creatures, celestial, terrestrial, and infernal, are under the entire control of the mighty God, without whose permission they cannot draw a breath, or move a limb, or think a thought. All events, from the least to the greatest, are ordained, over-ruled, and accomplished by that invisible, but all-powerful Being, who ‘ sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers ;’² whose will all creatures, though joined hand in hand, can by no means resist ; whose vengeance all joined hand in hand cannot escape. ‘ In the hand of the Lord is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand him ? ’³ ‘ The Lord of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it ? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back ? ’⁴

But the omnipotence of God is shown also in his works of *Grace*. It requires the exercise of the same power to new-create the soul, as to create it at first. It is ‘ according to the working of his mighty power,’⁵ that any sinner believes in Christ, and that any believer abides in Christ.

This attribute is one of which the Lord is very jealous. He indignantly spurns any limitation of his power, whether for judgment or for mercy, saying, ‘ Is any thing too hard for the Lord ? ’⁶ ‘ Is my hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem ? ’⁷ And it was a principal charge

¹ Ps. cxxxvi. ² Is. xl. 22. ³ 2 Chron. xx. 6. ⁴ Is. xiv. 27.

⁵ Eph. i. 19. ⁶ Gen. xviii. 14. ⁷ Is. l. 2.

laid against Israel, that ‘they *limited* the Holy One.’¹ We should therefore seek for habitual and deep impressions of the infinite might of our God, and inquire what practical lesson is to be drawn from a belief in it.

Surely it places in the strongest light the folly and madness of contending with the Almighty, and the security and blessedness of being *at peace* with him ; for how inconceivably dreadful must it be to ‘drink of the wrath of the Almighty,’—how blessed to have him for our defence and our delight ! How then are we to avoid the one, and enjoy the other ? Many persons give themselves no great concern in this matter. They talk of ‘trusting in the Almighty,’ as if he were certainly on their side ; while yet they avow no peculiar trust in that mediation and that covenant, through which alone the omnipotence of God can be to sinners a ground of confidence. O that all would be persuaded to inquire solemnly, diligently, impartially, whether the Almighty is likely to prove their defence, or their destruction ; for one or other he will prove to every human being ; and there is but *one* way to escape his dire vengeance, and secure him for our Father and our Friend. *This* is the way ; to behold Omnipotence, to submit to, and embrace it, *in the person of the God-Man, Christ Jesus.* Yes, this is the Christian’s ground of confidence in the Almighty, that among the glorious titles announced by the prophet as belonging to Messiah, is this one, ‘*The Mighty God.*’² We need but to open the gospels, to perceive Almighty power displayed by the Lord Jesus, while he trod this earth. He performed many acts proper to Omnipotence alone : he walked on the sea, he calmed the raging elements, he opened the eyes of one born blind, he healed the sick, and raised the dead ; so that, in *his* works, the

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 41

² Is. ix. 6.

people beheld ‘*the mighty power of God*,’ and were amazed.¹ And all these exercises of omnipotence over the body, Jesus declared to be types of his equal power over the soul ; to pardon sin, to bestow life eternal ; in short, to do ‘*whatsoever the Father doeth*.’² Before he left this scene of his humiliation, the Saviour declared his possession of omnipotence by a new and peculiar claim. He had possessed it, by essential dignity, from eternity ; for ‘*by him were all things made*,’³ and ‘*by him all things consist*;’⁴ but, in reward of his obedience and sufferings, and for the performance of his Mediatorial office, ‘*all power was given him in heaven and in earth*.’⁵

After his ascension, the Redeemer, in revelation to his beloved apostle, directly appropriates the name of Almighty.⁶ Whoever, then, is by faith united to Christ, may say, ‘The Lord is on my side ; I will not fear : what can man do unto me?’ My help is laid upon ‘One that is mighty ;’ therefore, though weak and helpless in myself, and surrounded by deadly foes, ‘I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me.’ In all the dangers and troubles of the church, also, this is the ground of confidence and hope to her children, that He who laid down his life for her, and is now invested with the supreme government of her concerns, is none other than the Almighty God. Well then might the prophet call upon the daughter of Zion to shout, to be glad and rejoice with all the heart, because the Lord God in the midst of her was mighty :⁷

The mighty God, in Christ, says to every penitent and believing soul, ‘Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me ; and he shall make

¹ Luke ix. 43. ² John v. 19. ³ John i. 3. ⁴ Col. i. 17.

⁵ Mat. xxviii. 18. ⁶ Rev. i. 8. ⁷ Zeph. iii. 14–17.

peace with me.¹ And the soul may confidently reply, ‘ Will he plead against me with his great power ? No ; but he would put strength in me.’²

‘ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.’

SECT. II.—THE OMNIPRESENT AND OMNISCIENT GOD.

ANOTHER attribute of the Most High, which renders him still more the Object of terror to his enemies, and of confidence to his friends, is OMNIPRESENCE. If there were any one spot in the universe, out of reach of the presence of God, the sinner need not so much fear his Omnipotent vengeance ; if there were any spot in the universe, out of reach of his presence, his children could not have entire confidence in his Omnipotent protection. But listen to his awful question, ‘ Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off ? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him ? saith the Lord : do not I fill heaven and earth ? saith the Lord.’³

Of his enemies the Lord declares, ‘ Though they dig into hell, thence shall my hand take them ; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down : and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence ; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them.’⁴

¹ Is. xxvii. 5.

² Job xxiii. 6.

³ Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.

⁴ Amos ix. 2, 3.

But to the children of God it affords the strongest support and comfort to reflect that they cannot be banished from the presence of their heavenly Father : that though they leave all earthly friends, to dwell in distant and heathen lands ; though, afar off upon the sea, they are excluded from the joys of Christian fellowship and Christian ordinances ; though about to depart out of this tabernacle, to enter an unseen and untraversed world,—they are always, and in all situations, encompassed by God's all-pervading presence, and may appropriate the promise given to Moses, ‘my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.’

But this attribute derives its chief strength, both for terror and for comfort, from its involving another attribute, that of OMNISCIENCE. If sinners, while their outward actions were open to the Ever-present God, could yet conceal their *hearts* from him, they might deceive him, as they do their fellow men ; and, under a mask of love and obedience, hide the enmity of their carnal minds. But it is as impossible for the soul to escape from his Spirit, as for the body to flee from his presence.¹ He knows the things that come into our minds, every one of them.² Our deceitful and desperately wicked hearts are intimately known to God ;³ our thoughts, before they arise in our mind, he understands afar off.⁴ Nor does he see all this as a passive spectator : he *searches* the heart, and *tries* the reins, searches our inward parts, as ‘with candles ;’ exploring each dark recess, tearing off the disguise from every hidden motive.

We cannot enter into the awful importance of this attribute, without anticipating those moral perfections of God which are to form the subject of future meditations ; his Holiness, which makes sin hateful to him ; and

¹ Ps. cxxxix. 7. ² Ezek. xi. 5. ³ Jer. xvii. 9. ⁴ Ps. cxxxix. 2.

his Justice, which binds him to punish it. But, with the light of conscience alone, with those views of God and of ourselves, which even natural conscience, when roused by a sense of danger, or the fear of death, does sometimes awaken,—Is it not a fearful thought, that ‘ all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do ? ’¹—that it is He who can do every thing, from whom no thought can be withholden.²

Hard, indeed, must be the conscience which trembles not at this thought: yet, alas ! there are many who profess to believe all the attributes of God, and tremble not. The reason is obvious ; they know neither themselves, nor Him with whom they have to do. All, however, whose minds are at all enlightened on these two subjects, are ready to confess that despair would be their portion, did they not discern the attributes of Omnipresence and Omniscience in ONE, who, to these awful perfections, has united the sympathy of a common nature, the tender compassion of a friend, a brother,—even in Christ Jesus. Yes ; in him were manifested, in human nature, the universal presence, and the all-seeing, and heart-searching knowledge of the Most High God. Conversing with Nicodemus, he affirmed that the Son of Man was *in heaven*, while he spake *on earth*.³ When Nathaniel was under the fig-tree, at a distance from Jesus, Jesus saw him ;⁴ and it is plain that he saw, not merely the occupation and attitude of Nathaniel, but the state of his heart, otherwise he could not have pronounced so decided a testimony to his guileless sincerity. To all different characters, Jesus displayed his knowledge of their inward thoughts and untold words. When his disciples reasoned or disputed on subjects that they were afraid to mention to him, he often astonished them by

¹ Heb. iv. 13. ² Job xlvi. 2. ³ John iii. 13. ⁴ John i. 43.

diselosing their reasonings.¹ When the scribes and pharisees secretly aeeused him of blasphemy, Jesus *perceived their thoughts.*²

He told the woman of Samaria *all that ever she did;*³ he warned his disciples, that there were some of them that believed not : ‘ For (says the Evangelist), Jesus *knew* from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.’⁴ The same Evangelist gives this unequivocal testimony to the infinite knowledge of his Master :—‘ Jesus *knew all men*, and needed not that any should testify of man,—*for he knew what was in man.*’⁵

A most affecting consequence of his Omnipresence was, that Jesus *knew all things that should come upon himself,*⁶ all things that should be inflicted upon his righteous head, by his followers, by his countrymen, by the Romans, by the spirits of darkness ; and all the awful things that should come upon him from the hand of his Father ; all, all were spread out before him during his whole life of sorrow.

But those sorrows ended, the Saviour joyfully declared his *Omnipresence* with his servants, for their direction and support ; saying, ‘ Lo ! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world ;’⁷ and, after his ascension to glory, he declared this to be the object of some of his severest judgments on the wicked, that all the churches might know that *it was He which searcheth the reins and hearts.*⁸

In how different an aspect does this attribute now appear, when seen in the face of Jesus Christ, our merciful and faithful High Priest, in whom God ‘ beholds not iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel.’ Still, however, it forms a test whereby to try our state before

¹ Mark ix. 33, 34.

² Luke v. 22.

³ John iv. 29.

⁴ John vi. 64.

⁵ John ii. 24, 25.

⁶ John xviii. 4.

⁷ Mat. xxviii. 20.

⁸ Rev. ii.

God ; for, while the ungodly use every means of banishing from their minds the fact that God's all-seeing eye is upon them, and, by the help of Satan, and an evil world, are too successful ; the godly man cherishes the recollection with care, because he knows it is necessary both to his safety and comfort. Although the thought of all his sins being laid open to God, fills him with grief and shame, more acute by far than he would feel by their exposure to the whole world, he yet would not for worlds exclude the eye of God. Far from shrinking from the Divine scrutiny, he courts it, he opens his heart to it, saying, ‘ Search me, O God, and know my heart ; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me.’ Knowing, in some measure, the treachery of his own heart, and how little his most faithful earthly monitors can see or know his inward state, where could the Christian look for self-knowledge, for conviction of sin, for reproof, or correction, or any thing else necessary to his improvement, did the Lord not search and try him !—‘ It is our comfort that we *can*, and our necessity that we *must*, address particularly to this attribute, when we engage solemnly in a work of self-examination, that we may have a clearer eye to direct us than our own ; that we may not mistake brass for gold, or counterfeit graces for true ; that nothing that is filthy and fit to be cast out, may escape our sight, and preserve its station. Beg the help of the eye of God in all your searches and self-examinations.’¹

And, essential as this attribute is to the believer's safety, it is no less so to his comfort : for, ‘ If God had not an infinite understanding of us, how could we have a perfect and full pardon from him ? It would not stand with his honour, to pardon he knew not what.

¹ Charnock.

' He knows what crimes we have to be pardoned, when
 ' we know not all of them ourselves, that stand in need
 ' of a gracious remission ; his Omniscience beholds every
 ' sin, to charge it upon our Saviour. If he knows our
 ' sins that are black, he knows every mite of Christ's
 ' righteousness, which is pure ; and the utmost extent
 ' of his merits, as well as the demerit of our iniquities.
 ' Though God knows our sins, "*oculo indice*," with an
 ' eye that marks them, yet he doth not see them "*oculo
 judice*," with a judicial eye ; his Omniscience stirs not
 ' up his justice to revenge, but his mercy to pity. As
 ' he understands better than we, what we have commit-
 ' ted ; so he understands better than we, what our Saviour
 ' hath merited ; and his eye directs his hand in the blot-
 ' ting out guilt, and applying the remedy.'¹

Again, how could the Lord apportion strength to the believer's day of affliction or temptation, did he not know the exact weight and power of these upon his soul ? Where would be the efficacy of prayer, either secret or public, did the Lord not read the secrets of all hearts ? What good would it do a man to know ' his own sore
 ' and his own grief,' if the Almighty did not know it also ?

O then let Christians rejoice, and let sinners tremble, at the view of God's Omniscience ; and let all hasten to be at peace with ' Him that searcheth the reins and hearts.'

SECT. III.—GOD ONLY WISE.

IF we can conceive of a being endowed with infinite power and infinite knowledge, but not endowed also with infinite wisdom, it is evident that the want of this latter perfection would not only lessen the efficacy of the

¹ Charnock.

two former, but would convert them into engines of mischievous and disorder. Suppose a prince, possessing minute information of all that was done or said in his dominions, and absolute power to enforce his decrees, were devoid of discretion and sagacity, his information would be turned to no good account, and his power, not being directed to profitable ends, nor even guided to the best means for attaining the ends at which he aimed, would drive at random, sometimes working good, sometimes evil, and could never be depended upon: the reign of such a prince could neither be glorious to himself, useful to his subjects, nor formidable to his enemies.

Such, if we may be allowed the comparison, would be the effect of Omnipotence and Omnicompetence, if not united with INFINITE WISDOM. But, ‘ blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for *Wisdom* as well as *Might* are his.’¹ Indeed, so inseparable are the perfections of JEHOVAH, that, in Scripture, we rarely find one of them extolled, without union to another or more;—as in Job, xxxvi. 5; ‘ He is mighty in *strength* and *wisdom*;—Jer. xxxii. 19; *Great in Counsel, and Mighty in Work;*’ (and, including Omnipotence also,) ‘ for *thine eyes are open* upon all the ways of the sons of men.’

We see, then, in the infinite Wisdom of God, the surest pledge that his infinite power and knowledge will be employed to the best and most profitable ends, and that these ends will be infallibly secured, by means unerringly adapted to promote them.

The great ends which God has in all his works are, his own glory, and the welfare of his creatures. In all his acts, whether in Creation, in Providence, or in Grace, infinite wisdom is displayed, equally with infinite power, to promote these ends. Do we open the book of Crea-

¹ Dan. ii. 20.

tion, ‘this wisdom is seen in the fitness of every thing for its end, and the usefulness of it. After the most diligent inspection, there can be found nothing in the creation unprofitable ; nothing but is capable of some service, either for the support of our bodies, recreation of our senses, or moral instruction of our minds. Not the least creature but is formed, and shaped, and furnished with members and parts, in a due proportion for its end and service in the world ; nothing is superfluous, nothing defective. The earth is fitted in its parts ; the valleys are appointed for granaries, the mountains to shadow them from the scorching heat of the sun ; the rivers, like veins, carry refreshment to every member of the body ; plants and trees thrive on the face of the earth, and metals are gendered in the bowels of it, for building, and other uses, for the service of man. There “ he causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man ; that he may bring forth food out of the earth.”

‘The sea, the showers, the winds, the seasons of the year, the day and night, have their use. Hence let us ascend to the bodies of living creatures, and we shall find every member fitted for use. Every creature hath members fitted for that element wherein it resides. But how much more of this divine perfection is seen in the soul ! A nature furnished with a faculty of *understanding* to judge of things, to gather in things that are distant, and to reason and draw conclusions from one thing to another ; with a *memory* to treasure up things that are past ; with a *will* to apply itself so readily to what the mind judges fit and comely, and fly so speedily from what it judges ill and hurtful.’¹

And do we, in faith, read the book of Providence, and ponder the ways of the Lord, in the government of all

¹ Charnock.

his creatures, especially of man, as rational, as sinful, and as restored; in governing and overruling all events, to his own glory, and the good of his people;—how brightly does his Wisdom shine, in making use of means, which, to our apprehension, seem the most unlikely, or most contrary, to effect his great designs! Many of his acts, both in creation and in providence, are, it is true, far beyond our powers to appreciate or understand. But this is necessary to the perfection of wisdom, that it should be unfathomable by our short and measured line. It would be shallow indeed, if we could sound its depths. St Paul, who had penetrated farther than most men into this vast subject, was forced to cry out, ‘O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor?’¹

This exclamation, however, though applicable to the works of Providence, seems to have been called forth by meditation on the mysteries of God’s Wisdom, as shown in his works of Grace, and in the reasons which regulate his gift of mercy; according to that saying, ‘Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth.’ Here, especially, we are overwhelmed in wonder, and feel conscious of our utter inability to scan the ways of the All-wise God. ‘He giveth not account of his matters;’ none can say unto him, ‘What doest thou?’ We now see but a small part of his immense plan; but when the whole shall be unfolded to our view, we know that every part will be found the result of perfect Wisdom, as well as of perfect Justice.

What then, we ask, must be the bearing of this attri-

¹ Rom. xi. 33, 34.

bute, in addition to those already considered, on the relation between God and his offending creatures? Must it not increase still more the dread of sinful creatures, to find that He ‘in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind;’ and whose all-pervading presence, and all-searching knowledge, besets them behind and before, possesses also Wisdom, infinitely above their reach to comprehend, which, guiding his Omnipotence, makes its success infallible? Must it not infuse a still more awful conception of the Divine Being, until the terms on which we stand with him are ascertained to be terms of peace?

We see, indeed, his wisdom exerted for the provision and comfort of every living thing. We see it in the preservation and salvation of his people; but we see it also in the destruction of his enemies; and how shall we discover in which of these ways his wisdom will be manifested towards *us* individually?

If any are, in sincere anxiety, proposing to themselves this question, we would direct them to that brightest and most glorious manifestation of Divine wisdom which the universe ever beheld, which makes known the manifold wisdom of God to the principalities and powers in heavenly places,¹ even that displayed in the scheme of *redemption by the death of Christ*. ‘It is manifold wisdom, so it is called, as manifold as mysterious. Variety in the mystery, and mystery in every part of the variety. It was not one single act, but a variety of counsels met in it,—a conjunction of *excellent ends* and *excellent means*. The *ends* are, the glory of God, the salvation of man, the defeat of the apostate angels, the discovery of the blessed Trinity, in their nature, operations, their combined, and distinct acts and expressions

¹ Eph iii. 10.

‘ of goodness. The *means* are the conjunction of two natures, infinitely distant from one another ; the union of eternity and time, of mortality and immortality; death is made the way to life, and shame the path to glory. The weakness of the cross is the reparation of man, and the creature is made wise by the foolishness of preaching ; fallen man grows rich by the poverty of the Redeemer, and man is filled by the emptiness of God ; the heir of hell made a son of God, by God’s taking upon him the form of a servant ; the son of man advanced to the highest degree of honour, by the Son of God becoming of no reputation.’¹

With this exhibition of the Wisdom of God before their eyes, let fearful sinners ask, whether he *wills* to exercise that wisdom in their salvation or their destruction ? This manifestation of Divine Wisdom will appear more evident as we proceed to the more immediate study of the work of Redemption. It belongs more to our present subject to prove, that *heavenly wisdom dwelt so richly in the Saviour personally, as to testify his right to the name, GOD ONLY WISE.* That he was from eternity possessed of this infinite perfection, will be proved in a separate essay upon the title ‘Wisdom,’ or ‘the Word.’ But did this wisdom so shine forth through the veil of his humanity, as to prove him *the Only Wise God*? We have only to open the history of the gospel with a docile spirit, to be convinced of this truth. At an age usually remarkable for volatility, Jesus astonished all that heard him with his understanding and answers. When he began his ministry, ‘ many hearing him were astonished, saying, from whence hath this man these things ? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him ?’ Repeated testimony is borne by the Evangelists to the wisdom displayed by their

¹ Charnock.

Master in the most trying circumstances. His subtle adversaries were constantly on the watch to ensnare him by insidious questions ; but his answers, while they showed consummate prudence in avoiding the snares laid for himself, always contained some wise and useful lesson for the benefit of his auditors ; and the result invariably was, that his enemies retired, marvelling, silenced, confounded. Nor did he always keep on the defensive. He, in his turn, put a question to the Pharisees, the effect of which is thus described, ‘ No man was able to answer him a word ; neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.’ Surely this implies a persuasion of something more than human in the wisdom of Jesus, agreeing with the confession of the officers who were sent to take him, ‘ Never man spake like this man.’

But the most convincing proof of Jesus Christ being the all wise Jehovah is, that he had the power to *bestow wisdom* on others. It is God alone who ‘ giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding ;’ but Jesus promised to *give* to his apostles a mouth and *wisdom* which all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay or resist ; and he *actually bestowed* divine knowledge upon them before his ascension, opening their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures. St Paul declares, that in Christ (or in the mystery of his Messiahship) are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*¹

Since then the Only Wise God has, in Christ, become God our Saviour, how secure are the interests of the church and of every believer ! Who, or what can harm those who are protected by the Almighty, Ever-present, All-seeing, and All-wise Jehovah ?

¹ Col. ii. 3.

‘ To God only wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen.’

‘ To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and for ever. Amen.’

SECT. IV.—THE HOLY GOD, OR THE HOLY ONE.

WE have now drawn, very imperfectly, the great outlines of God’s *natural* attributes. We proceed next, though with a trembling hand, to sketch his *moral* perfections, those which, in human language, constitute his *character*, the revealed principles of his conduct towards his creatures.

And first, we are to contemplate him as ‘ THE HOLY LORD GOD,’ ‘ THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL.’ But how shall man, who is abominable and filthy, presume to speak of the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy ? Lord, it is only through the teaching of thy Holy Spirit, that we can profitably or acceptably meditate on this perfection of thy name. Oh ! be pleased to pour down his sanctifying influences upon the writer, and upon every reader, that they may be kept from polluting thy holy name, and be led to deeper and more practical views of this part of thy character.

Holiness, in its widest sense, may be taken for the whole of God’s moral perfections. The prophets call the Lord the Holy One, as if the title were synonymous with that of God. All his goodness may be termed his holiness ; but the more peculiar meaning of the term is God’s *abhorrence of evil*, and *love of good* ; his *loving righteousness*, and *hating iniquity* : As it is said, ‘ He

that tries the heart has pleasure in uprightness ; but the foolish shall not stand in his sight, for he hates all workers of iniquity.' '*If any, this attribute hath an excellency above his other perfections.*'—None is sounded out so loftily, with such solemnity, and so frequently by angels that stand before his throne, as this : Where do you find any other attribute trebled in the praises of it, as this ? "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts : the whole earth is full of his glory;"¹ and, "The four beasts rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty."² His power or sovereignty, as Lord of Hosts, is but once mentioned ; but with a threefold repetition of his holiness. Do you hear in any angelical song any other perfection of the Divine Nature thrice repeated ? Where do you read of the crying out, Eternal, eternal, eternal ; or, Faithful, faithful, faithful, Lord God of Hosts ? Whatever other attribute is left out, this God would have to fill the mouths of angels and blessed spirits for ever in heaven.—As it seems to challenge an excellency above all his other perfections, so it is the glory of all the rest. As it is the glory of the Godhead, so it is the glory of every perfection in the Godhead. As his power is the strength of them, so his holiness is the beauty of them.—his justice is a holy justice; his wisdom, a holy wisdom ; his arm of power, a holy arm ;³ his truth or promise, a holy promise.⁴ Holy and true go hand in hand.⁵ His name which signifies all his attributes in conjunction, is holy.⁶ Yea, he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.⁷ It is the rule of all his acts, the source of all his punishments.—His mercy is not exercised without it, since he pardons none but those that have

¹ Is. vi. 3. ² Rev. iv. 8. ³ Ps. xcvi. 1. ⁴ Ps. cv. xlvi.

⁵ Rev. vi. 10. ⁶ Ps. ciii. 1. ⁷ Ps. cxlv. 17.

‘ an interest by union, in the obedience of a Mediator,
‘ which was so delightful to his infinite purity.’¹

This attribute of the Lord he inculcated most solemnly and repeatedly on the minds of his ancient chosen people. His injunctions to obedience and personal holiness were continually enforced by a reference to his own perfect holiness. ‘ Be ye holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy.’ He testified the utmost indignation against those who feignedly or hypocritically did homage to his holiness, saying, ‘ Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me ; but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts and with your idols.’

The *holiness* of God, or his *hatred of sin*, was awfully shadowed forth in the Mosaic ritual. For, to what purpose were all the minute laws for purifying every person or thing before it could be employed in divine worship,—the cleansing of the altar and its offerings, of the priests and their garments, of all the sacred vessels, and even of the sanctuary itself,—but to declare, in terms not to be misunderstood, that every thing touched by man is polluted and abominable in the pure eyes of the Holy One ; that he would be *hallowed* by all who approach him ? The awful sacredness of every thing consecrated to the worship of JEHOVAH was also declared, by the careful seclusion of the vessels of the sanctuary from the touch or the gaze of any but the priests ; by the appointment of one particular family to carry these vessels ; and the prohibition against the Kohathites themselves from touching or seeing them uncovered, lest they died.

Nor was this threat a vain one ; several awful instances record the infliction of death for an unhallowed touch,

¹ Charnock.

or a curious gaze. Uzzah, though he erred from officious zeal, in putting his hand to support the ark, was smitten for his error. The men of Bethshemesh, to the number of fifty thousand, were smitten, because they looked into the ark of the Lord.

But it may be said, What have we to do with all this ? Those burdensome rites and ceremonies have long passed away, and given place to the pure, simple religion of the Gospel, which admits men to communion with their Maker on terms far more easy and friendly. It is true, those outward forms of purification are no longer needful ; and we may be thankful that nothing can now render us obnoxious to the holy law of God but moral or religious defilement. But is God to be less feared and reverenced, because he now demands chiefly the inward purity, of which those outward purifications were the signs ? Is it easier to keep the heart and conscience clean, than to refrain from touching any thing pronounced unclean by the Levitical law ? Is not ‘ the thought of foolishness sin ?’ Does not the Holy One require truth in the inward parts, and command us to purify our hearts, as well as to cleanse our hands ?

Those, however, who draw notions of a relaxation in the holiness of God, from the abolition of the ceremonial law, and the introduction of the milder dispensation of the gospel, overlook the fact, that, by the very way in which God provides for the salvation of sinners, he has given to the universe the most tremendous proof of his hatred to sin. Yes, *in the cross of Christ* was manifested, more tremendously than could have been manifested in the eternal punishment of the whole rebel race, that *sin* is the abominable thing which *God hates*. For the strength of one disposition is to be ascertained by the strength of an opposite one which it overcomes. The

hatred of God to sin is therefore to be measured by the infinity of his love to his only begotten Son. For the victim here was not personally defiled by sin : on the contrary, he was ‘ holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.’ He was born the only ‘ holy Child’ that ever entered this world of sin ; his bitterest enemies could find in him no fault at all ; the Prince of this world had nothing in him. As the Servant of the Father, he had magnified the law by perfect obedience, had finished his work, and glorified him on earth. Nay, more than all this, *Jesus was himself THE HOLY ONE*, equal to the Father in holiness, as in dignity. He is so styled in the xvith Psalm, a passage twice applied to him in Aets.¹ Yet, when he stood in the room of sinners, with their guilt and pollution imputed to him, he must endure, in agonies to us inconceivable, the dreadful effects of God’s *abhorrence to sin*. Shall we then abuse the grace offered in the gospel, and harden our hearts against the fear of God, because he has in such an astonishing manner opened to us a way of salvation ? God forbid. Rather let us view in the Cross the infinite hatred of God to sin, and then learn to hate it more in ourselves. This is the invariable effect of increasing acquaintance with the Holiness of JEHOVAH. We see it in all the saints who had nearest access to God ; in Isaiah, in Daniel, in Abraham, in Job, who, when his eyes saw God, abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes. O that there were more of this spirit of self-abhorrence amongst Christians ! But alas ! our views are, for the most part, sadly dull and confused, our apprehensions sadly inadequate, of the Holiness of the Lord our God, and of our own unholiness. Did we see these two objects aright, we could never have a moment’s peace, but

¹ Acts ii. 31, and xiii. 35.

while exercising a lively faith in Jesus, sprinkling his blood upon our consciences, and imploring his Spirit to sanctify us.

Since, however, ‘the *Holy one of Israel*’ has become ‘*his Redeemer*,’¹ the true Israelite need not fear to contemplate at once the perfect Holiness of God, and his own deep defilement. Formerly he used to try to soften down the requirements of the law, to meet his own corrupt and indolent inclinations ; and would have given a great deal, had it been possible for him to blot out *holiness* from the list of divine attributes. But now, seeing the demands of perfect holiness fulfilled by his Surety, and beginning to taste, in his own experience, the joys of a begun sanctification, holiness has become, in a manner, his element, in which he desires constantly to dwell. He even rejoices at the remembrance of God’s Holiness, which once he hated, and tried to forget ; and finds sweet solace and refreshment, amid the pollution of every thing here below, in looking up to the immaculate purity and Holiness of JEHOVAH, and in the expectation of being one day holy as He is holy.

SECT. V.—A JUST GOD—THE JUST ONE.

ANOTHER moral perfection which resides in infinite fulness in Jehovah is **JUSTICE**. He is perfectly *upright and sincere*, both in his own nature, and in all his dealings with his creatures. ‘The Lord is a God of judgment.’² ‘All his ways are judgment : a God of truth and without iniquity ; just and right is he.’³ Justice and judgment are so in-

¹ Is. xlivi. 14.

² Is. xxx. 18.

³ Deut. xxxii. 4.

separable from his nature and government, that they are said to be ‘the habitation of his throne.’¹

As Holiness renders *sin hateful* to God, Justice *compels* him (if we may so speak) *to punish it*. ‘For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.’² Even while declaring his infinite goodness, long-suffering, and mercy, the Lord declared his Justice also; his determination by no means ‘to clear the guilty,’ or ‘justify the wicked.’³

But not in words only has the Lord testified this awful attribute of his character. The most tremendous proofs of his Justice abound in the history of his dealings with his accountable creatures. A very slight acquaintance with the Old Testament will suggest many undeniable proofs, that Justice, as well as Love, is essential to the character of Jehovah. In the early ages of the world, flagrant acts of disobedience, and indeed many acts which are commonly thought very venial, were followed by the immediate vengeance of Divine Justice, which made it impossible for men to forget the hand of God in the judgment, as now they too often do. Punishment and death were often the immediate consequences of sin; whether committed by a single individual, or by the whole congregation of Israel; by the inhabitants of one city, or by a whole generation of mankind. But we may go farther back than the Deluge, for marks of God’s terrible judgment. We may measure it in some degree, by the miseries brought upon all mankind, for the one sin of our first parents, and by the hopeless perdition of the angels that fell.

At the opening of the Christian dispensation, lest any should imagine that God had ceased to be the Avenger of sin, after providing in so astonishing a manner for its

¹ Ps. lxxxix. 14.

² Job xxxiv. 11.

³ Exod. xxxiv. 7; xxiii. 7.

forgiveness, awful evidences were given of the undiminished rigour of his Justice: witness the death of Ananias and Sapphira, the blindness of Elymas, the miserable death of Herod; and, shortly after, the dreadful and long-predicted doom of Jerusalem. In the times in which we live, immediate retribution does not often follow crime. Men may be proud, profane, liars, hypocrites; and yet continue in health and outward prosperity: and ‘because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.’¹

Other causes lead to this boldness in sin; especially ignorance of ourselves, of the character of Christ, and of the design of his death. Want of self-knowledge keeps most men in a state of ruinous security; while the sword of Divine Justice hangs ready to fall on their heads. They refuse to believe that they are in a state of condemnation: or if any fears on this subject do arise, they soothe them by reflections on the character of Christ, and the efficacy of his death. They dwell always on the milder features of the Saviour’s character, his meekness, lowliness and love; forgetting his sterner features of holy hatred to sin, and unexampled severity in punishing it, which are equally conspicuous to the candid beholder. It is true, the blessed Jesus came into the world, ‘not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.’ His lips breathed the sweetest and tenderest accents of love and compassion. But did they not also breathe the most severe and cutting rebukes, and threats of personal vengeance upon his obstinate adversaries? and it is remarkable that the clearest, strongest, and most fearful declarations of eternal misery, ever heard by man, came from the mouth of the meek and lowly Saviour.

¹ Eccles. viii. 11.

He even proclaimed himself the righteous Judge, who should execute the just deerees of the Father's vengeance upon all the workers of iniquity. How vain and false then is the idea, that we are now placeed under a less striet and severe government than that of the Father ; that God does not now require such implieit obedience to the moral law, as he did under former dispensations !

Christ, our Lord, is *the Just One* ; and oh ! how wonderfully has he proved this, by bearing in his own person, the full vindication of his Father's Justicee ! Rather than that Justicee should be tarnished, in the extension of pardon to the unjust, this JUST ONE was eontent to be made a Curse ; to have his body and soul filled with agony and torture, to the utmost that human nature, upheld by the divine, could endure ; until death, the wages of sin, terminated his woe.

And could it possibly be the design of the Redeemer, in thus magnifying the Jnstance of God, to encourage sinners to think lightly of that Justicee ? Could that amazing transaetion, which must almost have made the angels in heaven tremble, be intended to lull men in repose and seeurity ? Alas ! such is the perverseness of our fallen nature, that thousands, perhaps unconseiously to themselves, thus abuse the fact of Christ's atonement, to remain at peace with their sins.

But while many, perhaps the most part, err from presumptuous abnse of the gospel seheme ; others are cast down by partial and limited apprehensions of the attributes displayed in that scheme. The moral perfections of Holiness and Justice, added to the natural ones of Immutability, Omnipotence, Omnisiencee, and Wisdom, are indeed suffieient to make the stoutest heart tremble. When we consider, that He who is clothed with infinite power over our souls and bodies, and whose penetrating

glance pierces our inmost thoughts, is *holy* to hate sin, and *just* to punish it, are we not almost tempted to say, ‘ We cannot serve the Lord; for he is a holy God, he is a jealous God.’—‘ If I sin, thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.’ To angels who never sinned, the Holiness and Justice of Jchovah may be delightful subjects of contemplation; but to one who is altogether sin, what do they speak but vengeance and destruction?

A right understanding of the character of God in Christ, is the only remedy for presumption on the one hand, and for despondency on the other. For this is the glory of the gospel scheme, that it preserves unsullied the infinite Justice and Holiness of the great God; while yet, it opens a way of salvation to the chief of sinners: that, in Christ, God is, at once, ‘ *a Just God, and a Saviour.*’¹ The Christian, then, need not be afraid to see himself utterly condemned by the just law of God; since that law has been perfectly fulfilled, and its penalty fully endured, by his Surety. He rests his hope of salvation, not on the Mercy of God alone; but on his Justice also: according to the saying of the apostle, ‘ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and *just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’²

By the covenant of grace, the Father is pledged, *in justice to the Son*, to save all who trust in him; and what can be too great for the Father to bestow, as the just reward of the obedience and sufferings of his Co-equal and Co-eternal Son?

But let all beware of trusting in mitigated Justice and uncovenanted Mercy. No hope of salvation can be secure, that rests upon cloudy and diminished views of any of the divine attributes. And they, who are not moved

¹ Is. xlvi. 21.

² 1 John i. 9.

to hate sin, and flee from it, by the view of the cross, have no ground to suppose that they are interested in the salvation there wrought.

‘*Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name: for thou only art holy.*’

SECT. VI.—THE GOOD LORD.

THE GOODNESS of the Lord, like his Holiness, may, in its general sense, be taken for the whole of his moral perfections, which are all *good*, lovely, and excellent. But it seems more peculiarly to mean his Mercy and Love, as combined with his Holiness and Justice. When JEHOVAH, according to his promise, made all his *goodness* to pass before his servant Moses, this goodness consisted almost exclusively of *mercy, grace, forgiveness, long-suffering*; yet it included *justice* by the clause, ‘and that will by no means clear the guilty.’¹ In the Psalms, when the attribute of *goodness* is ascribed to the Lord, it is generally accompanied by the acknowledgement of his *mercy*; ‘O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is *good*, because his *mercy* endureth for ever.’² When Isaiah would mention the great *goodness* of the Lord toward the house of Israel, it was ‘according to his *mercies*, and according to the multitude of his *loving-kindnesses*.’³

We may then understand the term ‘goodness of the Lord’ as his ‘mercy, whereby he pities and relieves the miseries of his creatures;’ as his ‘grace, which is the spring and source of all the benefits we receive from him, and which flows from mercy as its fountain.’⁴

¹ Ex. xxxiv. 5–7.

² Ps. cxxxvi. 1.

³ Is. lxiii. 7.

⁴ Cruden.

When we would sing of mercy, however, we must also sing of judgment.¹ We can have no right conceptions of God's Mercy, unless we understand, in some degree, his hatred to those sins which in mercy he pardons, and his just right to condemn those whom in mercy he saves. Whenever the Love of God is represented as modifying or annihilating his Justice, it is degraded into a quality resembling human frailty, rather than Divine perfection. It is the union of 'goodness and severity,' the exercise of infinite Mercy in harmony with infinite Justice, that forms the perfection of the Divine character.

If any one attribute, however, may be said to excel, where all are in perfect proportion, that of Love excels all others in the mind of JEHOVAH; for it has been well remarked, God never styles himself Justice or Wrath, but he styles himself Love. Unsearchable as are the depths of his wisdom and knowledge; deep and unfathomable as are his judgments, the depths of his Love are more unfathomable still. He delights not in vengeance, that is his strange work; but he 'delighteth in mercy,'—he rests in his love.

In a general sense, 'God is good to all.' The exuberance of his Goodness is as wonderful in all his works, as the infiniteness of his power and wisdom. 'He crowneth the year with his goodness.' 'The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.' Even the brute creatures richly partake of this Goodness; their wants are all supplied, and each species is placed in the situation most favourable to its enjoyment. And what shall we say of the Goodness of God to the fallen race of mankind? Bearing in mind that this earth is under the curse for sin; are we not astonished to look around, above, and within us, and discover such innumerable traces of Divine Love and

¹ Ps. ci. 1.

kindness? Not only are all our necessary wants liberally provided for, but rich and varied sourees of delight are spread out before us; not only is utility wonderfully displayed, but beauty, fragrance, melody, and a thousand charms are bestowed for the purposes of our enjoyment. For instance, plants would have served all the purposes of food, medicine, and other important uses, though unadorned with their exquisite beauty, and grace, and sweetness. Shells would have protected and housed their dull inmates just as well, had they not been turned with such elegance, peneilled with such delicacy, tinged with such rich glowing hues, or polished with such brilliant lustre. All nature might have answered the ends of necessity and utility, without being, as we behold it, so full of sources of enjoyment. And why is this, but to stir us up to admire the loving-kindness of the Lord? Then look at his providential dealings. Let every individual trace the goodness and mercy that have followed him all the days of his life; remembering his own unworthiness of the least of God's mercies; and then let him estimate, if he can, the Love of God.

But it may be said, Many men have but a small share of the blessings of either Nature or Providence; their lot is so dismal, it is difficult to trace any marks of mercy in it. Yet, let us remember the desert of all mankind, without exception: it is eternal woe. Every man, therefore, who is out of hell, is receiving unmerited mercy: his day of grace is continued, and he is chastened less than his iniquities deserve. And when we reflect, how God's holy name is blasphemed, his laws trampled on, and his vengeance set at defiance, in many places where he is professedly worshipped, and where he has made known his terrors and his mercies; is it not amazing that he can forbear sending down fire from heaven to

consume his obstinate enemies, or eausing the earth they tread to open and swallow them up ? Truly his ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts ; for though our abhorrence of evil is so infinitely inferior to his, our impatience at it is so infinitely greater, that his long-suffering and continued bounty, to perverse transgressors, surpasses all our comprehension. How many, like the Israelites, are ‘ delighting themselves in his great goodness ;’ that is, in the temporal gifts which he showers upon them ; but, nevertheless, ‘ serve him not in his great goodness’ that he gives them, thanklessly receive his daily benefits, and pervert the riches of his liberality, to forget and dishonour the Giver.

But there is one proof of the Lord’s Goodness to man, which incomparably outweighs all other proofs : ‘ God *so loved* the world, that *he gave his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’¹ ‘ This goodness is greater than that manifested in creation, in regard of its cost. This was ‘ a more expensive goodness than what was laid out in ‘ creation ; the redemption of one soul is precious,² ‘ much more costly than the whole fabric of the world, ‘ or as many worlds as the understandings of angels, in ‘ their utmost extent, can conceive to be created. For ‘ the effecting of this, God parts with his dearest trea- ‘ sure, and his Son eclipses his choicest glory ; for this, ‘ God must be made man, eternity must suffer death, ‘ the Lord of angels must weep in a cradle, and the ‘ Creator of the world must hang like a slave ; he must ‘ be in a manger at Bethlehem, and die upon a cross at ‘ Calvary : unspotted righteousness must be made sin, ‘ and unblemished blessedness be made a curse. He was ‘ at no other expense than the breath of his mouth to

¹ John iii. 16.

² Ps. xlix. 8.

‘ form man ; the fruits of the earth could have maintained
‘ innocent man, without any other cost ; but his broken
‘ nature cannot be healed without the invaluable medi-
‘ cinc of the blood of God. View Christ in the womb
‘ and in the manger, in his weary steps and hungry
‘ watchings, in his prostrations in the garden, and in his
‘ bloody sweat ; view his head piercend with a crown of
‘ thorns ; view him in his march to Calvary, and his
‘ elevation to the painful cross, with his head hanged
‘ down, and his side streaming blood ; view him pelted
‘ with the scoffs of the governors, and the derisions of
‘ the rabble ; and see, in all this, what eost goodness was
‘ at for man’s redemption.

‘ Divine goodness centred in Christ, both in his cross
‘ and in his crown ; for it was for the purging our sins
‘ he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.¹
‘ And the whole blessed society of principalities and
‘ powers in heaven admire this goodness of God, and as-
‘ eribe to him honour, glory, and power, for advancing
‘ the Lamb slain.² Divine goodness did not only give
‘ him to us, but gave him power, riches, strength, and
‘ honour, for manifesting this goodness to us, and open-
‘ ing the passages for its fuller conveyances to the sons of
‘ men. Had not God had thoughts of a perpetual good-
‘ ness, he would not have settled him so near him, to
‘ manage our cause, and testified so much affection to
‘ him on our behalf. This goodness gave him to be de-
‘ based for us, and ordered him to be enthroned for us :
‘ as it gave him to us bleeding, so it would give him to
‘ us triumphing ; that as we have a share by grace in
‘ the merits of his humiliation, we might partake also of
‘ the glories of his coronation ; that from first to last we
‘ may behold nothing but the triumphs of divine good-

¹ Heb. i. 3.

² Rev. v. 11-13.

'ness to fallen man.'¹ And how does man receive this best, this unspeakable gift? Alas! man *so hates God*, that he will rather run the risk of perishing, than receive eternal life on these terms—on the terms of free, full, unconditional grace. Yes, it is a melancholy truth, that, much as the natural man dislikes the Holiness and Justice of God, he dislikes his free Love still more; because that makes a demand of reciprocal love on his part, which he is conscious he does not feel; and takes from him every plea of self-confidence and self-justification. Yet even with this ingratitude the Lord bears; repeating his tender invitations and urgent remonstrances, plying the sinner with mercies and with judgments, with means of grace, and strivings of his Spirit; till, if he persist in obstinately rejecting all his goodness, he leaves him to perish by his own wilful perverseness.

There is, however, one class of men who really 'taste and see that the Lord is good,' who enjoy, in all his temporal gifts, the tokens of his special favour, and have hearts given them to receive and relish those better gifts, which he has laid up for them that fear him. Of these men, whatever be their external condition, it may be safely affirmed, 'Truly God is good to Israel.' They are satisfied with his goodness, with the goodness of his house, with his spiritual provisions for time, and with his glorious promises for eternity. 'O how great is God's goodness, which he has laid up for them that fear him!'² which he has prepared for them that love him! Though eye hath not seen these things, nor ear heard them, neither have they entered into the heart of the natural man, God reveals them by his Spirit to his own people, even the 'deep things' of his love, that they may know the things that are freely given them of God.³

¹ Charnock.

² Ps. xxxi. 19.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 9-12.

When a believer sets himself to consider the love and mercy which he has individually received from the hand of God ; tracing them from a past to a future eternity ; remembering that there was in himself no cause for love, but rather for hatred ; and comparing all his base returns with the Lord's unwearyed patience and loving-kindness, his feelings can find no utterance in words. And were we to recommend one specific to believers, as most effectual to quicken, to humble, to purify, to exalt them, it would be this, that they *know*¹ and *believe* the love that God hath to them. For, while the ungodly despise the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, to embolden themselves in sin, and to reject his free salvation, the goodness of God most effectually leads the godly to repentance and every good work. They *fear* the Lord and *his goodness*, trembling and grieving at the thought of offending that God, whose name is Love.

After all that has been said, is it needful to prove that the title **GOOD LORD** belongs to the *Son*, as well as to the *Father*? Was the love of the Son, in giving himself for us, less adorable than the love of the Father in giving the Son ? Did Jesus at all disclaim the attribute *good*, when he said, ‘Why callest thou *me good*? There is none good but *One*, that is *God*.’ No, certainly. But he meant to lead the speaker to a true sense of his own words, to show him that he erred in applying the term *good* to one whom he considered a mere man ; though, had he known Whom he addressed, he would have most justly applied it. Surely we need not labour to prove that He who ‘went about doing good,’ was the same Being whose name is Love. The immensity of his love passeth knowledge ; it has a breadth and a length, a depth and a height, incomprehensible : And the more

1 John iv. 16.

we ‘know the love of Christ,’ the more are we ‘filled with the fulness of God.’¹

Future occasions will offer for pursuing this blessed theme. Meantime, let us join in the aspirations of the faithful,—‘O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.’ ‘O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.’ ‘Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation.’

SECT. VII.—THE LORD THAT IS FAITHFUL.—THE GOD OF TRUTH.

ANOTHER moral perfection of JEHOVAH, which crowns and confirms all the foregoing, is his FAITHFULNESS or TRUTH, —his *fidelity, sincerity, and punctuality, in performing his promises.* God is faithful and true in performing his threatenings also, but generally it is in conjunction with *mercy or kindness* that his Faithfulness is extolled in Scripture. The Psalmist, in several places, extols the *mercy and truth of God.* ‘It is his *mercy* that prevents ‘and promises, and it is his *truth* that executes and performs.’² These two blessed attributes have been companions, from the beginning of God’s dealings with his people, and shall continue to be so to the end. As ‘the *mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him,*’³ so his counsels of old are faithfulness and truth,⁴ and his truth endureth to all generations.⁵ As his mercy is in the heavens, his faithfulness

¹ Eph. iii. 18, 19.

² Cruden.

³ Ps. ciii. 17.

⁴ Is. xxv. 1.

⁵ Ps. c. 5.

reacheth unto the clouds.¹ As his mercy shall be built up for ever, so his faithfulness shall God establish in the very heavens.²

For the exercise of this perfection, it was necessary that God should make promises, and come under voluntary engagements to his people. Accordingly, we find on record many remarkable and important engagements entered into by him with his servants, and with the world at large; and for the brighter manifestation of his own glory, and for the trial and strengthening of faith, a long period often intervened between the giving of the promise and its fulfilment. Whether this period, however, was long or short, how great and numerous soever were the obstacles opposing, the event invariably proved, that ‘the Lord is God, who keepeth truth for ever.’

This Faithfulness of the Lord was remarkably displayed in his dealings with the family of Abraham. He entered into a covenant with that patriarch, which he confirmed to Isaac and Jacob, to give to his posterity the land of Canaan, wherein he had not a foot of ground; and this posterity was to spring from a son unborn, whose birth was so long delayed as to put the faith of Abraham to a severe trial. Many circumstances conspired to render the fulfilment of the covenant extremely improbable to human apprehension,—the long captivity of the chosen seed in a foreign land,—the dangers and judgments they experienced in the wilderness,—the fierce and strong enemies whose established power they had to overturn ere they could take possession of the promised heritage. All these things seemed against them, yet, at length, in spite of all obstacles, the promises of God were exactly fulfilled, and his Faithfulness was thus attested by the pious historian. ‘There failed not ought of any

¹ Ps. xxxvi. 5.

² Ps. lxxxix. 2.

good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel,—all came to pass.¹

Another remarkable instance of God's Faithfulness was that experienced by the house of David. The Lord had sworn in truth unto David, that his children's children should sit upon his throne for evermore.² And how astonishingly was this oath performed! It is true, David had many and sore troubles in his family before his death; ten tribes deserted the throne of his grandson, and the remaining kingdom was too often torn by dissensions, and stained by crime: the Lord, according to his word, visited their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; this formed a necessary part of his fatherly discipline and Faithfulness; nevertheless, his loving kindness he did not utterly take from him, nor suffer his Faithfulness to fail; his covenant he did not break, nor alter the thing that had gone out of his lips.³ The kings of Judah, compared with those of Israel, were virtuous and prosperous. The sceptre remained in the family of David till the captivity in Babylon. Even after that, the governor, Zerubbabel, was of David's line; and, finally, the ruins of the house of David were repaired, and his line exalted to more than earthly grandeur, by the coming of the true 'King of the Jews.'

But in the coming of Messiah, we behold the most glorious manifestation of God's Faithfulness, as well as of all his other perfections. In the cross of Christ most truly, 'mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace kissed each other.' And the superior importance of this event to any other in the history of the world, was marked by the great length of time intervening between its first prediction and its accomplish-

¹ Joshua xxi. 45. ² Ps. cxxxii. 12. ³ Ps. lxxxix. 20-34.

ment. When a sudden plenty was to be showered upon the land of Israel, the promise was given only the day before. When the Jews were to be restored from captivity, the promise was given seventy years before; but the coming of Him who was to restore liberty to the captives of Satan, and to shower down the blessings of eternal life, was promised four thousand years before it took place. And then, how gloriously, and fully, and exactly, was the Truth of God displayed in fulfilling his first gracious promise to Adam, of the Seed of the woman; his promise to Abraham, that in his Seed should all the families of the earth be blessed; his promise to the Israelites of a Prophet like unto Moses; to David, of a Son to sit upon his throne for ever; to the citizens of Zion, of the coming of their God! In short, how truly did God, by sending his own Son to be the Saviour of the world, ‘perform the merey promised to the fathers, and remember his holy covenant, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets sinee the world began.’

But not only was Christ, in his coming, in his obedience, his sufferings, and death, the most illustrious evidencee of the Faithfulness of God to all ages, and to all orders of beings. *He is himself the God of truth, the Truth itself.*¹ In Revelation, he is styled, ‘Faithful and true,’² ‘the faithful and true Witness,’ the Amen;³ and the Apostle declares, ‘All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.’⁴ To Christ, as Mediator, is now committed the fulfilment of all God’s promises to the church and to every believer. We have seen how he fulfilled those which he uttered before leaving this world; in sending the gift of the Holy Ghost; in the rapid establishment of the

¹ John xiv. 6.

² Rev. xix. 11.

³ Rev. iii. 14.

⁴ 2 Cor. i. 20.

Christian church ; its subsequent extension over so large a portion of the globe, and its protection against all enemies. And, with such proofs of the Faithfulness of our God and Saviour in times past, shall we hesitate to trust in him for the time to come ? No, let us remember that ‘ He is faithful that promised ; ’ He is strong as faithful, and merciful as strong. All that he has said shall surely come to pass ; in the universal reign of righteousness, in the final deliverance of his church after she has been purified and chastened, in the restoration of the Jews, and the bringing in of the Gentiles, in his own second coming to judge the quick and dead, and in the eternal glory of the New Jerusalem.

When, from contemplating the Faithfulness of Christ to his church, the believer turns his view inward, and considers the experience he has himself had of that Faithfulness, how are his wonder and gratitude excited ! Looking back to the time when first, by grace, he joined himself to the people and service of the Lord, and determined in His strength to walk Zion-ward, remembering his fears and perplexities, and how feebly he trusted in the promises of guidance, protection, and strength, which the Word of God, and his Spirit, held out to him ; and then, tracing the manner in which those promises have been actually fulfilled, far beyond his highest expectations, he thankfully confesses, ‘ Thou hast dealt with thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word.’ And this admiring gratitude is still further enhanced, by considering how often he would have departed from Christ ; how often, alas ! he has, in a measure, departed from him ; and yet, such has been the constancy and faithfulness of Him who loved him, that He has loved him still, and will love him to the end. The Lord delights to be reminded of his word and promise, because it honours his Faithfulness.

Let us, then, often pray, ‘*Remember the word* unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.’ ‘Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.’

CONCLUSION.

WE have been engaged, for some time, in studying the perfections of our God, one by one; and we trust the task has not been wholly unprofitable. But it is in conjunction with all the rest, that each one is seen to greatest advantage. It is the perfect harmony of attributes seemingly opposed to each other, that forms the glory of the Divine character. How brightly does God’s Wisdom shine, in contriving a way wherein his Justice and his Mercy may both find full and ample exercise!—wherein his hatred to sin, and his love to sinners, may be equally displayed, and the honour of his government be made consistent with the salvation of his guilty creatures!

We have attempted to prove, from Scripture, that every one of the attributes of Deity, natural and moral, resides in, and is exercised by, Christ Jesus our Lord; that, therefore, he must be equal to the Father, in glory and majesty. And we have not only proved this, as an article of faith, but shown it to be absolutely necessary to the safety and happiness of sinful creatures; as it is only when shining in the face of Jesus Christ, that any attribute of God can be the ground of confidence or comfort to man. This is especially evident, when we consider that even the milder features of the Divine character, viz. his Love and Faithfulness, when clearly understood, are distasteful and threatening to the unbeliever; while, to the believer, even his sterner features of Holiness,

ness and Justice are delightful and encouraging, because he views them in the face of Jesus Christ ; and, according to our situation with regard to Christ, whether by faith we are interested in his atonement and righteousness, or by unbelief are destitute of that interest, the *natural* perfections of God, his Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Unchangeableness are either engaged on our side, or against us. How unspeakably momentous, then, is the question, Are we in Christ, or are we not ?

What abundant reason have the children of Zion to rejoice in their King and their God ! How well grounded is their trust when trusting in Christ Jesus ! His Love he has proved to be infinite ; his Faithfulness is equal to his love, and pledges him to continue his work of love wherever he has begun it : his Holiness assures us that he hates those sins which we also hate, and that, at length, he will deliver us from them. His Justice, no longer directed against us, is engaged to destroy his and our enemies ; and the efficacy of his moral perfections in our favour is ensured by the natural perfections which he also possesses. His Mercy and Truth cannot fail, because they are based upon Immutability, informed by Omniscience, directed by Wisdom, and armed by Omnipotence.

To crown all, the infinite perfections of the Godhead are, in our Mediator, united to all the sympathies of Manhood, that nothing might be wanting to qualify him for the great work of bringing many sons to glory. Oh ! then, what think we of Christ ? He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. Is he all our salvation and all our desire ? If not, let us never rest satisfied till he is so, and till we can say of God, in Christ, ‘ Lo ! this God is our

God for ever and ever ; he will be our Guide, even unto death.'

' Now, unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. AMEN.'

PART II.

TITLES PECULIAR TO GOD THE SON IN HIS DIVINE NATURE.

ESSAY V.

THE RULER IN ISRAEL; WHOSE GOINGS FORTH
HAVE BEEN OF OLD, FROM EVERLASTING—THE
ANGEL OF THE LORD, OR ANGEL-JEHOVAH—HE
THAT DWELT IN THE BUSH—WONDERFUL.

THE magnificent titles under which we have hitherto studied our blessed Lord and Saviour, are due to him, by essential Deity, in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

Those which follow are peculiar to himself as Mediator between God and man.

After dwelling as we have lately done, on the wonders of his divine nature; on his eternal and unchangeable existence, as JEHOVAH; on his absolute and universal dominion, as Lord, and Lord of Hosts; and on his infinite perfections as God; our minds should be, in some degree, prepared to estimate his amazing condescension, in becoming Man, to suffer and to die.

But, before proceeding to the direct study of the Saviour as Man, we have some intermediate steps to take; some names or titles to examine, which involve at once his divine and his human nature; his essential dignity as God, and his voluntary humiliation as Man and Mediator. Of this description are the titles now before us; which are so much alike in signification, that we shall view them together. They were all anticipations of the Incarnation of Messiah, vouchsafed to the church of old.

On the first of these titles we shall not enlarge much, as it will be explained by those which follow. But its importance is thus expressed by an able commentator,¹ ‘“ His goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.”² ‘ This denotes his eternal co-existence with the Father, as ‘ the only-begotten Son; and his eternal appointment, ‘ in the counsels and decrees of God, to his Mediatory ‘ work, and to his Incarnation as connected with it.’ So clearly was this ‘ Ruler in Israel’ understood by the Jews to mean the Messiah, that when Herod sent to demand of the chief priests and scribes where Christ should be born, they replied by quoting the prediction of Micah.³ By so doing, they acknowledged that He whom they expected as the future Governor of Israel, had been Israel’s Ruler from everlasting. This truth will be more clearly brought out by examining another of the titles before us.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, OR ANGEL-JEHOVAH.

EVERY reader of the Old Testament is familiar with the appearances and manifestations of Jehovah to the patriarchs and saints of old.

¹ Scott.

² Micah v. 2.

³ Mat. ii. 4-6.

Every reader of the New Testament must be equally familiar with the sayings of Jesus, in reference to the Father, ‘ Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape ;’—‘ No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.’ Now these sayings, of themselves, would be sufficient to prove, that all the revelations of Jehovah, vouchsafed to his people in ancient times, were made in the Person of God the Son, as anticipations of his coming in the flesh.

But, besides these proofs from the lips of Jesus, there were, in the manifestations alluded to, internal evidences of a distinction of Persons in the Godhead, and of one of those Persons being, in a certain sense, subordinate to another. This is especially remarkable in all the instances where ‘ the Angel of the Lord ’ was the speaker or agent. For there is generally such a change in the appellations given him, from Angel to Man, from Man to God, Lord, or Lord of Hosts, as is sufficient to convince every unprejudiced mind, that the Person speaking or acting was Divine ; and yet, employed as Messenger (for so the word Angel signifies), to another Divine Person.

This title introduces to us so many interesting passages of Old Testament history, that it is difficult to select from them.

When Abraham, by God’s command, had stretched forth his hand to slay his son, ‘ the Angel of the Lord ’ called unto him out of heaven to stay the dreadful stroke. And in what terms did this Angel express himself ? He said, ‘ Now I know that thou fearest *Me*, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from *Me*. ’ A second time the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham ; and his language was then still more emphatical. He said,

‘ By *Myself* have I sworn, saith JEHOVAH,’ &c., promising all temporal and spiritual blessings to the posterity of Abraham ; and in his Seed, to all the nations of the earth. Could the Angel who thus announced himself, and thus promised, be any other than JEHOVAH ? Yet he was the Messenger of JEHOVAH.¹

The patriarch Jacob was honoured with a memorable interview with this mighty Angel. While engaged in solitary meditation, ‘ there wrestled a Man with him.’ But the whole scene proves this Man to have been divine: for he tells Jacob, that in prevailing with *Him*, he had prevailed with *God*; and Jacob’s own reflection on the interview was, ‘ I have seen *God* face to face.’ That the Angel voluntarily suffered the importunity of Jacob to prevail with him, was marked by the shrinking touch he gave to the sinew of the patriarch’s thigh.² The evidence drawn from this transaction is much confirmed by the reference made to it by the prophet Hosea. He says, ‘ Jacob had power with *God*: yea, he had power over the *Angel*, and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there *He* spake with us; even the *Lord God of Hosts*; the *LORD* is his memorial.’³ ‘ To the same Person, then, are given these several titles, “ *a Man*,” “ *the Angel*,” “ *God*,” yea, “ *the Lord God of Hosts*.” And to whom could all these titles belong, but to Him, who appearing then “ in the form of *God*,” afterwards took on him “ the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ? ” ’⁴

The same patriarch, in giving his dying blessing to the sons of Joseph, ascribes to ‘ the Angel’ that Almighty protection and bounty which had fed him and redeemed him from all evil during his whole life : yea, he identifies

¹ Gen. xxii. 10–18.

² Gen. xxxii. 24–32.

³ Hosea, xii. 4, 5.

⁴ Scott.

‘the Angel’ with the God of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac.¹

The Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses, in an astonishing manner, in a flame of fire in a bush;² an appearance which we shall view separately hereafter. In the meantime, we would notice the very strong confirmation which it furnishes of the divinity of this Angel or Messenger. There was evidently but one speaker; yet he is first called ‘*the Angel of the Lord*;’ then in verse 4th, ‘*the Lord*;’ and ‘*God*.’ ‘Moreover he said, *I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*’ ‘And (it is added), Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon *God*.’ The Angel had indeed demanded of Moses a token of divine homage, commanding him to put off his shoes from off his feet; for the place whereon he stood was holy ground. Now, had he been the highest created angel, he would have repelled with abhorrence any token of worship from man, saying, ‘See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant,—worship *God*.’³ But the supreme glory of this Angel was put beyond all doubt, by his assuming (verse 14) the incommunicable name, ‘**I AM THAT I AM.**’

In all the journeyings of the children of Israel in the wilderness, they were guided, guarded, and ruled, by the same mysterious Being, who is sometimes called JEHOVAH, sometimes the ANGEL-JEHOVAH. And in sending before them his ‘Angel,’ the Lord revealed to them his character and dignity in the following impressive terms: ‘Behold, I send *an Angel* before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for

¹ Gen. xlvi. 15, 16. ² Exod. iii. ³ Rev. xxii. 9.

my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed *obey his voice*, and *do all that I speak*; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.¹ Here we see that *the Angel* was to be feared and obeyed as *God* himself; for his justee was inflexible, as that of God; and to *obey him* was *to do all that God spake.*

When the Israelites had entered the promised land, and were about to commence the attack against their devoted enemies, the Angel whom God sent before them, appeared to their leader Joshua, in the form of ‘a Man, with his sword drawn in his hand;’ and, in answer to Joshua’s inquiries, declared himself ‘Captain of the host of the Lord:’ upon which Joshua worshipped him as his Lord; and not only was this worship received; but he was farther commanded to loose his shoe from off his foot; the same token of reverential awe which had been required of Moses, when the Lord appeared to him in the bush. And this being done, he received from the same Person, in the name of JEHOVAH, the orders contained in the ensuing chapter.² ‘All these circumstances prove ‘beyond a doubt, that this *armed Man* was no other than ‘the Son of God, JEHOVAH, the second Person in the ‘saered Trinity, the Captain of our salvation, anticipat-‘ing his incarnation, and assuring Joshua of success in ‘this war.’³

The visits of the Angel of the Lord did not cease upon the settlement of Israel in Canaan. He still came, from time to time, to rebuke, to threaten, or to encourage them, as they stood in need. An affecting instance of this is recorded in Judges.⁴ The people had become indolent and self-indulgent, satisfied with present ease, and care-

¹ Exod. xxiii. 20–22.

³ Scott.

² Joshua v. 13–15.

⁴ Judges ii. 1–5.

less in the work of the Lord, and the full enjoyment of his covenanted blessings ; when ‘*an Angel of the Lord*’ came up from Gilgal (the very place where the *armed Man* promised to give all their enemies into their hand) ; and reproached them for their disobedience, and breach of faith ; threatening them with punishment corresponding to their sin, in not destroying the altars of idolatry, and not persisting in the extermination of the idolaters. The language in which the reproof was given demonstrates Who this Angel was : for he claimed in his own Person the merit of delivering Israel from Egypt, and of bringing them into the land which He sware unto their fathers. He claimed the sovereign prerogatives of issuing commands, requiring an account for disobedience, and inflicting punishment. He could, therefore, be no created angel. So deeply were the people affected by this reproof, that the place where it was delivered was named *Bochim*, that is, *Weepers*.

For a very different purpose, did the Angel-Jehovah appear, in after times, to Gideon,¹ and to Manoah and his wife ;² even for consolation and encouragement in times of darkness and trouble. The circumstances attending those two manifestations were so similar, that it will suffice to consider one of them ; and we choose the latter, it being the most remarkable and explicit. The nation of Israel had been, for their sins, delivered into the hand of the Philistines, who oppressed them forty years ; when the Lord made known to Manoah and his wife, his merciful purpose of delivering their country, by means of a son to be born to them. On the first appearance of God’s Messenger, sent to announce the deliverance, the wife of Manoah took him for ‘*A man of God*’ ; but described his countenance as very terrible, like that of an *angel* of

¹ Judges vi.

² Judges xiii.

God, so that she durst not ask him whence he was. But when, in answer to their prayers, the same Messenger was sent again, he was styled ‘The Angel of God,’ ‘The Angel-Jehovah.’ Manoah seems to have been perplexed as to the nature and dignity of his mysterious Visitor; but, anxious to do him honour, and show him kindness, in whatever mode he would be pleased to accept it, he therefore prayed the Angel to let him detain him, until they should have made ready a kid for him; uncertain perhaps whether it would be received as a refreshing meal, or as a sacrifice. The reply of the Angel showed that he needed not bodily sustenance, ‘Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread.’ And, by the other part of his reply, he might be supposed to decline, in his own person, the right of Divine homage,—‘And if thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it *unto the Lord*.’ This, however, was equivalent to the speech of Jesus, already noticed, ‘Why callest thou *me* good? There is none good but One, that is God’: ¹ not as disclaiming the proffered homage, but as a reproof to the speaker for offering it to one whom *he did not know to be Divine*: for, had this angel been the highest of created beings, it would have been idolatry in Manoah to offer sacrifices to him. The sequel shows that this Angel did accept the burnt-offering in his own person. In the interval, however, Manoah ventured to inquire *the name* of his guest; but the answer given resembled that of the *Man* who wrestled with Jacob. ‘Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is *secret*?’ The word here rendered *Secret* signifies *Wonderful*, and is the same name as is given to Messiah by the prophet.² ‘In consequence of this intimation, Manoah, though no priest, offered a burnt-offering upon a rock, and he was

¹ See p. 57.² Is. ix. 6.

‘ accepted in so doing. Probably fire from the rock consumed the sacrifice. He offered it to Jehovah, and *He* ‘ did wondrously’ (there is no word for the Angel in the original); ‘ according to the meaning of his name *Wonderful*; for, in the presence of Manoah and his wife, he ‘ ascended towards heaven with the flame of fire from off the altar, and by that Manoah knew him to be the ‘ *Angel-Jehovah*, and he was afraid, lest death should be ‘ the consequence of having ‘ *seen God*.’ From these circumstances, the reader will easily collect *whom* Manoah ‘ supposed the angel to have been.’¹

After this period, we do not trace any distinct appearances of ‘the Angel of the Lord;’ but the prophets had visions of him, in characters and offices, similar to those in which he appeared to the patriarchal saints. Zechariah had a remarkable vision of this kind.² He saw and communed with One in the form of *a Man*, who yet acted in the two-fold character of *Commander of the Lord’s host*, and *Intercessor for his Church*. ‘ The person called “ *a Man*” and “ *The Angel*,” was indeed the great Advocate and Intercessor of the Church, and was introduced as pleading with the Father in behalf of Judah and Jerusalem, which had lain under his indignation seventy years.’³

In the last of the prophets we find a clear and beautiful prediction of the coming of the blessed Angel, or ‘ Messenger of the covenant;’⁴ and he is here plainly identified with *the Lord of the temple*, which he could not have been, without being also the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel.

After Messiah had come in the flesh, he no longer repeated those visible manifestations of his presence which preceded his incarnation, but in the Revelation made to

¹ Scott.

² Zech. i. 8-17.

³ Scott.

⁴ Mal. iii. 1.

his apostle John, he still adopted occasionally the form of a mighty Angel. At least there are several actions ascribed in that book to an angel, which seem peculiar to ‘the Angel of the Covenant.’ One action, in particular, can be ascribed to none but him, that of offering up the prayers of all saints, perfumed with his much incense, upon the golden altar which was before the throne, which incense caused them to ascend up with acceptance before God.¹

HE THAT DWELT IN THE BUSH.

ALTHOUGH the event recorded in this title has been already adduced, as one of the many proofs of the divine nature of the Angel of the Lord, the scene which it recalls is so rich in spiritual instruction and consolation, that we are inclined, with Moses, to ‘turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.’²

First, we would see in the burning bush a type of the greatest sight the universe ever beheld,—*Jehovah dwelling in human form.* When God came to bring peace on earth, and good will toward men, he grew up, not as a lofty cedar, but as a lowly, tender plant, a root out of a dry ground. Yet out of the midst of this humble tabernacle issued the voice of the living God; thence beams of heavenly glory went forth continually; and on one occasion they shone with such bright effulgence, as to dazzle the eyes of beholders, and strike them to the ground. But *this* was the most affecting feature of resemblance. By the mysterious union of the Divine and human nature in the person of Immanuel, he could and did endure, without being consumed, the intense

¹ Rev. viii. 3. 4.

² Ex. iii. 3.

fire of the Father's wrath, a single breath of which is sufficient to devour the sinner as stubble, and which, but for his gracious interposition, every one of the human race must have endured 'in everlasting burnings,' in that place where 'the fire is not quenched.'

But, taking another view of the burning bush, we may see in it a lively emblem of *the church* on earth. Though worthless and insignificant in her own nature, and despised by the world, she is rendered sacred and honourable by the in-dwelling of JEHOVAH, who makes his glorious voice to be heard out of the midst of this bush, and so overrules and restrains the flames of persecution, affliction, and temptation, that they only serve to purify, not to destroy her. Often have Earth and Hell done their utmost to consume the true church from off the face of the earth ; and their efforts have at times been allowed so far to prevail, that, to the eye of sense, the issue has seemed doubtful. But still *the bush has not been burnt*. The church has come out of the furnace, purified as silver ; and the ashes of her martyrs, given to the winds of heaven, have, like the winged seeds of plants, been wafted to distant regions, and there have sprung up 'trees of righteousness' to the glory of God.

But let us 'turn aside' to the retired chamber of the *suffering believer*, and here also we shall see a great sight. We behold a poor frail being, who, in his own nature, is fitted for destruction, burning with fire, yet not consumed. The furnace has been heated seven times : to severe bodily suffering, are added separation by absence or by death from the dearest earthly relatives ; cares and anxieties for those that remain ; poverty, perhaps, and unmerited reproach ; daily recurring vexations and trials ; and, worse than all these, the power of temptation, and the constant harassings of indwelling sin, ready

to add poignaney to every other grief. Yet, in spite of all this, *the bush is not burnt*: the soul of the believer is kept ‘in perfect peace;’ in proportion as the flames grow hotter, the consolations grow brighter; as the outward man perisheth, the inward man is renewed day by day; and this inward renewing is the more wonderful when, by reason of bodily weakness, the man is disabled from ‘drawing water’ with his wonted activity from ‘the wells of salvation.’ Now, how is this mystery to be solved? To the eye of the natural man it is inexplicable; but to the eye of faith a solution is presented, as it takes a nearer view of the scene. *This* is the reason *why the bush is not burnt*: in the midst of the fiery furnace, at the believer’s side, is walking ‘One like the Son of God;’ and so clearly is his presence realised by the sufferer, that faith almost becomes sight, and the sinking spirit is sensibly upheld by his ‘everlasting arms.’ His promise is verified,—‘When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee.’ Therefore the child of God is enabled to rejoice in the midst of tribulation, even ‘with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’ The presence of his Saviour cheers him through long wakeful nights of pain and weariness; the strength of his Saviour enables him calmly to await the will of God, whether that *will* be to protract his sufferings here, or to remove him speedily from all he has known and loved on earth. The former, he knows, will, by the blessing of God, gradually destroy the bands of sin which still enthrall him; the latter, he is assured, will introduce him into the immediate presence of Him, whom, having not seen; he yet supremely loves, and desires to be with. He even glories in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him, saying with the apostle, ‘I take

pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake ; for when I am weak, then am I strong.'

What blessing, then, can be compared to '*the good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush*,' whose presence can give pleasure in the midst of pain, and joy in the midst of sorrow, can bring strength out of weakness, and life out of death ?

May He who dwelt in the bush condescend to dwell in each of our hearts, purifying and strengthening them, and making us living monuments of His redeeming and preserving grace.

CONCLUSION.

Let us now, by God's help, try to draw some practical instruction from the subject we have been considering. The instances above quoted form but a small selection from the ' goings forth of the Ruler in Israel ;' from the visits of the Angel-JEHOVAH, recorded in Holy Writ. Yet surely they are sufficient to entitle him in our estimation to the name he himself assumed, *Wonderful*. Is he not Wonderful in his person, in his offices, and in his character ?

He is indeed Wonderful in his original nature, possessing, as God, all possible perfections in infinite fulness. But he is especially Wonderful as God-man ; as having displayed, from the beginning of time, the glory of the Lord of Hosts in the form of an Angel, and even of a Man ; as having exacted the worship due to JEHOVAH alone, and yet communed with men in the most condescending manner ; as having in all ages sustained, and from time to time foreshown, those offices which he after-

wards fully assumed, of Captain, Ruler, Shepherd, Guide, Redeemer, Lawgiver, and Intereessor to the church.

The character of this mighty Angel, as displayed in the various manifestations we have been studying, calls for our profound veneration, mingled with ardent affection, and unbounded confidence. He is, we see, inflexibly just, to punish the obstinately rebellious : the gift of pardon is in his hands, to bestow it or to withhold. While obedience to His voice ensures the favour and protection of Omnipotence, to despise or provoke Him exposes to the vengeance of the Almighty. Yet, in his love and in his pity he redeems his people ; in all their affliction he is afflicted, and he bears and carries them, feeds and guides them, all their life long.¹ In his hands are placed, by the Father, all blessings temporal and spiritual, especially those which pertain to salvation ; he is appointed to dispense them as he will, not to one family, or one nation, but to all the families and nations of the globe.

May we not safely appeal to every believer, if this Angel has not *done wondrously* in your own experience, and on your own behalf ? He may, indeed, have caused you to wrestle hard with him ere you could obtain his blessing, but at length he graciously suffered you to prevail ; he blessed you, and bestowed upon you that ‘ new name which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.’ Since the time, when he rescued you from bondage worse than Egyptian, can you not testify that he has gone before you, kept you in the way, driven out your enemies from before you, redeemed you from all evil, and made all seeming evils to work for your good ? Too often, alas ! the Angel has had to rebuke you for unfaithfulness to his covenant, and base returns for all his kindness.

¹ Is. lxiii. 9.

But the sorrow produced by these rebukes has been so refreshing, so beneficial, that you only wish you could oftener experience it : and you cannot frame a kinder wish for your friends, for your country, and for the world at large, than that there should be many Bochims every where. For you know, that when the Lord calls his people to weep, he soon turns their weeping into rejoicing ; that when truly humbled before him, they receive the most encouraging tokens that he accepts their offerings, which, in the flame of the Redeemer's sacrifice, aseend up to heaven ; and were there more Bochims among Christians, such supplications would rise out of the Angel's hand before the altar above, as would draw down the richest blessings upon the church and the world.

Finally, let us be thankful that the covenant of grace, of which Jesus is the Messenger, is revealed to us, not in the obscure though precious manifestations vouchsafed to God's servants of old, but in the clear light of the Gospel.

And the Lord enable us to be proportionally faithful to His covenant.

ESSAY VI.

THE WORD—WISDOM.

THESE two titles are nearly synonymous, as will be seen on examining them. They also bear a close analogy to the titles studied in our last essay, being, like them, expressive of the Godhead and Personality of the Son, and of his agency on our behalf, previous to his incarnation.

There is, however, this difference between the former class of titles and the present, that, whereas the former led us to study the visible and sensible interpositions of the Second Person of the Trinity, the present will lead us more to meditate on the secret counsels and designs which prompted those visible interpositions.

The title ‘The Word,’ is found in Scripture almost exclusively in the writings of St John; he is, therefore, our best guide to its import. But before examining his testimony, we will consider in what sense it was understood by those to whom he first addressed his gospel, viz. by the Jews. For St John styles his divine Master the Word for three reasons; ‘1st, In respect of his *person*, he being the express *image* of the Father,¹ as our words are of our thoughts; 2d, In respect of his *office*; ‘because the Father *made known* his will to the church ‘in all ages by him,² as we declare our minds one to

¹ Heb. i. 3.

² John iii. 34.

‘ another by our words ; 3d, Beeause *the Messiah was called the Word of God by the Jews.* The Chaldee paraprasts, the most ancient Jewish writers extant, generally make use of the word MEMRA, which signifies ‘ the Word, in those places where Moses puts the name ‘ JEHOVAH. And it is generally thought, that under ‘ this term the paraprasts would intimate the Son of ‘ God, the Seeond Person of the Trinity. Now, their ‘ testimony is so much the more considerable, as having ‘ lived before Christ, or at the time of Christ, they are ‘ irrefragable witnesses of the sentiments of their nation ‘ concerning this article, since their Targum, or explication, has always been, and still is, in universal esteem ‘ among the Jews. And as they ascribe to Memra all ‘ the attributes of the Deity, it is concluded from thence, ‘ that they believed the divinity of the Word.

‘ They say that it was Memra, or the Word, which ‘ created the world, which appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai, which gave him the law, which spoke to him face to face, which brought Israel out of Egypt, which marched before the people, which wrought all those miracles which are recorded in the book of Exodus. ‘ It was the same Word that appeared to Abraham in ‘ the plain of Mamre ; that was seen of Jacob at Bethel ; ‘ to whom Jacob made his vow, and acknowledged as ‘ God, saying,¹ “ If God will be with me, and will keep ‘ me in this way that I go, &c. then shall the Lord be ‘ my God.”²

The evangelist then made use of a title well understood by his countrymen, when he opened his gospel with such deep and sublime declarations concerning the Word ; and this accounts, in some measure, for the abrupt and sen-

¹ Gen. xxviii. 20, 21.

² Cruden.

tentious manner in which he unfolds mysteries so unsearchable and divine.

‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.’¹ Here we behold, with equal clearness, the eternal Godhead of the Word, and his distinct Personality : that he was *from everlasting God*, and *from everlasting with God*. After this solemn declaration of the divinity of the Word, the Evangelist confirms the same, by ascribing to him acts and offices peculiar to Deity : first, he ascribes to him the work of *creation*,— ‘All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.’² We know assuredly, from divine truth, that no created being could be in any way associated with Jehovah, in the work of creation. The Lord says, ‘I am Jehovah, that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*, that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself*.’ Therefore He, ‘by whom all things were made,’ can be none other than Jehovah. Intimations of a plurality of Persons, in the vast work of creating the world, may be traced in the Old Testament ; as in the words, ‘God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness.’³ And in those of the Psalmist, ‘By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made ; and all the host of them *by the Breath of his mouth* ;’⁴ which latter expression is supposed to be parallel to that in Genesis, ‘the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters ;’ thus intimating the united operation of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in creating all things. We have, however, stronger evidence in the New Testament, of the Son’s being the agent of the Father in that great work. St Paul repeatedly ascribes it

¹ John i. 1, 2.

² John i. 3.

³ Gen. i. 26.

⁴ Ps. xxxiii. 6.

to him ; saying that God created all things *by Jesus Christ* ;¹ that *by him* God made the worlds ;² nay, more personally still, he says, ‘*By him*’ (that is, by God the Son) ‘ were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ;—all things were created *by him*, and *for him* :’³ not only *by him*, but *for* the accomplishment of that grand design, whereby he was to glorify the Father—the redemption of a fallen race.

But, to return to St John,—he further ascribes to the Word other prerogatives of Deity ; saying, ‘ In him was *Life*, and the *Life* was the *Light* of men.’⁴ He is the Fountain of *Life* and *Light* to all creatures : it is his office, as the Word, to make known the will of God to men : but, finding men not only in *darkness*, but in *death*, he must *quicken* them, ere they can *behold* the Light. Now who can bestow *Life* but the self-existent Jchovah? Who can make the *Light* shine in darkness, save He who at the beginning said, ‘ Let there be light, and there was light ?’⁵

As we purpose hereafter to view separately these two prerogatives of the Saviour, the power of bestowing *Life* and *Light*, we pass on, at present, to another evidence of his Deity mentioned by St John—his being *Proprietor*, as well as *Maker*, of the world, and of the men who inhabit it. ‘ He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto *his own*, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.’⁶ All men, without exception, are the property of the di-

¹ Eph. iii. 9.

² Heb. i. 2.

³ Col. i. 16.

⁴ John i. 4.

⁵ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

⁶ John i. 10–12.

vine Word, as his creatures : but in a peculiar and delightful sense are *they his own*, whom he brings into the family of God, by giving them power to believe on his name.

The Word, then, is the eternal and omnipotent *Creator*, the sovereign *Proprietor* of the universe ; the *Fountain of Light*, natural, intellectual, moral, and religious ; the *Giver of Life*, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

What shall we think, then, of his adorable condescension, when we read, ‘*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us?*’¹ How astonishing that He who had been from the beginning *with God*, should so humble himself as to dwell *with man* ! Following up this blessed fact, we might trace, through the gospels, how perfectly the Word acted up to his character and name ; exhibiting creative power ; bestowing light on the dark eye-balls, and on the still darker soul ; giving life, both bodily and spiritual, and faith to become children of God : and, in all this, acting as the Brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express Image of his person.

The *Word become flesh*, however, may be more appropriately viewed under other aspects ; as, the Son of Man, Jesus, the Messiah. We shall therefore confine ourselves to those points which Scripture connects with our present subject ; not forgetting the one with which St John concludes his testimony, that the *Word became flesh* for the purpose of bringing to us *grace* and *truth* ;² that in him there is laid up an inexhaustible fulness of every grace for his people’s use.

To the same writer we must still refer for later notices of the Word. He opens his first Epistle, in a strain similar to that in which he opened his Gospel, by declaring the eternal *Deity*, *Personality*, *Self-existence*, and real

¹ John i. 14.

² John i. 17.

Humanity of the Word,¹ whom he here styles ‘ the Word of Life ;’ affirming, in the clearest terms, that He whom himself and his brother apostles had seen, looked upon, and handled, was the same glorious Being, whose name was *Eternal Life* ; who, having existed from the beginning, *with the Father*, was in due time *manifested unto men..* In the same epistle is another very strong testimony to the divinity of the Word, and to the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity,—‘ There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost : and these Three are One.’² There being disputes, however, as to the authenticity of this text, we do not rest upon it the truth of the doctrine in question ; and ample evidence remains, though it were proved to be an interpolation, of which, nevertheless, there is no proof.

One more quotation from St John will close the illustrations of this title. In his book of Revelation, he describes a glorious vision with which he was honoured, of ‘ the Word of God.’³ On this occasion, the Word appeared in awful majesty, leading the armies of heaven to victory and to vengeance. His eyes were as a flame of fire, on his head were many crowns, and he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood. He had one name written, that no man knew but he himself : but the apostle recognized him under the name so dear to him, that of ‘ the Word of God ;’ and he read another name on his vesture, and on his thigh, ‘ King of kings, and Lord of lords :’ he was also called ‘ Faithful and True.’

¹ 1 John i. 1, 2.

² 1 John v. 7.

³ Rev. xix. 11–16.

WISDOM, OR THE WISDOM OF GOD.

WE turn now to the other title before us, and we cannot doubt its true application to the same Person whom we have just viewed as the Word. We cannot doubt but it is the Son of God who speaks in the name of Wisdom, in the book of Proverbs, especially in chapter viiiith.¹ The only alternatives are, to suppose Wisdom is there a personification of the Scriptures, or of the divine attribute of wisdom; neither of which suppositions are at all satisfactory. And, having the light of the New Testament to guide us, which shows Christ to be '*the Wisdom of God*',² we cannot err in taking the words of Wisdom for those of the divine Word, whether they were so understood by the Israelites or not.

'Wisdom is put for Jesus Christ, the eternal, essential
 'Wisdom, the Word, the Son of God. It was by Wis-
 'dom that God established the heavens, and founded the
 'earth.³ It was this Wisdom that God possessed from
 'everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.⁴
 'He was set up, he was anointed from everlasting, be-
 'fore all worlds, to be the Person by whom the Father
 'resolved to do all his works,—first to create, and then
 'to uphold, govern, and judge, and afterwards to redeem
 'and save the world; all which works are in Scripture
 'particularly ascribed to the Son of God.'⁵

Several particulars in Solomon's description of Wisdom can be truly and literally applied to none but the Lord Jesus Christ;⁶ as, for instance, the *publicity and universality of instruction* proclaimed by Wisdom, was never fulfilled till by Christ, and his apostles and succeeding

¹ Prov. viii., throughout.

² 1 Cor. i. 24.

³ Prov. iii. 19.

⁴ Prov. viii. 22, 23.

⁵ Cruden.

⁶ Prov. viii. 1-4.

ministers. Then, and not till then, heavenly Wisdom cried aloud, not to the sons of Abraham or of Israel only, but ‘to the sons of men’ generally.

The *infallible truth and righteousness*¹ which this Wisdom claims, could be justly claimed by none but Christ, the great Prophet of the church. Then, the *sovereign authority*² which Wisdom claims over all kings and judges of the earth, can be claimed by none but the divine Word, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords. Again, the gift of *durable riches and honour*,³ and the gift of *the Spirit*,⁴ which, in chapter 1st, this same Wisdom promises, can only flow from the Word, in whom all fulness dwells. But it is from the 22d verse of the viith chapter, downwards, that the application is most obvious and beautiful, running exactly parallel with the testimony of John concerning the Word, and according entirely with the whole doctrine of the New Testament and of prophecy, concerning the glory which the Son had with the Father, before the world was, his eternal appointment to the officc of Mediator, the love which he has ever borne to the sons of men, and the love which the Father bears to him on that very account. How significant, taken in this sense, are the words of Wisdom,—‘The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.’⁵ Then, after claiming participation in all parts of creation, in accordance with the Evangelist’s declaration, ‘All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made,’ Wisdom proceeds, ‘When he appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by him, as one brought up with him ; and I was daily his

¹ Prov. viii. 6–8.

² Prov. viii. 15, 16.

³ Prov. viii. 18.

⁴ Prov. i. 23.

⁵ Prov. viii. 22.

delight, rejoicing always before him ; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth ; and my delights were with the sons of men.' Now, in no sense could divine Wisdom rejoice in the habitable part of the earth, or take delight in the sons of men, except in the work of Redemption : therefore Christ, or his work, must be here meant ; and we have thus a touching view of the Son, anticipating the blessed fruits of his labour and sufferings, ere yet man had fallen, ere yet man was created.

The authoritative style in which this chapter is concluded, also proves the speaker to be a Divine Person : ' Whoso findeth *Me*, findeth *life*, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against *Me* wrongeth his own soul : all they that *hate Me, loke death.*' Furthermore, this application is warranted by the agreement between the *invitations* of Wisdom given in the beginning of the ninth chapter of Proverbs, and those contained in two parables of our Lord.¹ The feast is prepared, the wine mingled, and all, without exception, are pressed and entreated to come in. Now, such a general invitation was never issued from heaven to earth, till Christ, by his Gospel, opened the house of mercy, and spread the provisions of grace, before all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people.

With what profound reverence and adoring gratitude, ought we to contemplate the ' mystery of godliness,' brought before us in these titles of the Son of God ! They open to us a glimpse of that amazing love to our fallen race which dwelt in his bosom from all eternity, and which moved him to undertake the vast work of salvation. They exhibit him acting in this work as the Image, the Messenger, the Voice, as it were, of the Fa-

¹ Compare Prov. ix. 1–5, with Mat. xxii. 2–5, and Luke xiv. 16, 17.

ther, the Spirit also concurring in it, both in design and in operation.

How thankful should we be for the astonishing condescension of the Word, in consenting to be *made flesh*, and to dwell among us ; and how blessed is our lot in having been born in ‘these last days,’ wherein God ‘hath spoken unto us by his Son.’ O ! let us all take heed not to neglect so great salvation ; and let us continually look up to the Divine Word, for supplies of grace, and truth, of wisdom, light, and life.

ESSAY VII.

THE SON, THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.

WE have been so accustomed from infancy to think and speak of Jesus Christ as ‘THE SON OF GOD,’ and there is so much apparent simplicity in the title, that we are very apt to imagine there can be no great mystery connected with it, and to take for granted that we understand it aright. These very circumstances, however, render it extremely probable that our notions on the subject are *not* correct, and make the study of it the more necessary.

Many, we suspect, did they faithfully make the inquiry, would find that, drawing their notions of this title too closely from the earthly relation of the same name, they ascribe to the Son an existence derived from, and inferior to, that of the Father; and that, notwithstanding their confession of the equality of the Persons in the sacred Trinity, they involuntarily, and from early habit, assign to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, a relative dignity, corresponding to the order in which their names are generally placed.

No doubt, in the economy of redemption, this order is preserved; but, knowing assuredly, from Revelation, that each Person in the sacred Trinity, is God and Jehovah, we know that there can exist no superiority or inferiority in essence.

The relation between the Father and the Son infinitely transcends any ideas that we can form of it, with our present limited powers ; but we know it must be consistent with the other titles and attributes of the Son ; with his undervived and eternal existence, as Jehovah, Alpha and Omega ; with his supreme dignity, as God over all.

But, besides the misconception arising from too strict application of the earthly relationship, our ideas are confused by not understanding the title *Son*, as expressing the *Divine Nature* of our Lord ; by attaching it more to his *human nature* ; and thus confusing what he says of himself, as *God the Son*, with what he says of himself as the *Incarnate Son of God*.

Some readers erroneously imagine that Jesus is called the Son, with special reference to his Incarnation ; that he only became the *Son of God*, on becoming the *Son of Man* ; but this opinion is clearly refuted by the Scriptural declarations of the Love of God, in *sending his own Son*, in the likeness of sinful flesh¹, in *sending forth his Son*, to redeem us ;² which expressions would have no force, had not Christ been the Son of God *before* he was sent forth.

The Son is then the distinctive appellation of the Second Person in the glorious Trinity, apart altogether from his Incarnation ; although his Sonship was so openly attested by his Resurrection, that, by the mouth of the prophet, the Father then pronounced it anew, saying, ‘ Thou art my Son, *this day* have I begotten thee.’³ Its association with the names of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost, as *one name*,⁴ prove it to be a title of essential Deity ; acts peculiar to Deity are ascribed to Christ, in his character of the Son ; and he claimed the title in such

¹ Rom. viii. 3-32.

² Gal. iv. 4, &c.

³ Acts xiii. 33, and Ps. ii. 7.

⁴ Mat. xxviii. 19.

a manner as to involve a claim to Deity, and equality with the Father.

But it may be objected, Did not the Son himself confess his own inferiority, saying, ‘ My Father is greater than I !’—‘ the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do !’ Did he not allude to secret counsels of the Father, to which he was not privy ? Did he not pray to his Father, depend upon him for strength and consolation, serve, and submit to him, in the humblest manner, from the time when he said, ‘ Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business,’ to that awful hour, when he cried, ‘ Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit ?’ Most truly he did all this ; but it was in the character of Mediator, of the Elect Servant of the Father ; and this is what confuses our minds as to his Sonship, that we do not carefully separate his original dignity as *God the Son*, from his voluntary abasement as the *Incarnate Son*. And this confusion leads not merely to speculative error, but to sad practical ingratitude and irreverence. Because the eternal Son stooped, for our sake, to become the Servant of the Father, therefore we degrade him in our hearts, and rob him of his essential glory and majesty.

But, whereas a perversion or misconception of this title leads to dangerous error, the right understanding of it opens to us many delightful views of the Divine character and Persons. While we presume not to dive into the ‘ secret things’ implied in the relation between the Father and the Son, we may and ought to study ‘ the things that are revealed’ concerning it ; the points wherein it resembles the relation of an earthly son to an earthly father. These points of resemblance are clearly manifested in Scripture. The Son is one with the Father, in nature and perfections ; one with him in design, will, and

operation ; he is the Partner of his counsels ; the Object of his infinite love and delight ; his Image, Revealer, and Representative ; his Agent in all his works ; and his sole Heir.

Let us examine these points, as they are recorded, especially by St John, from the lips of the Son himself.

His entire *unity* with the Father, in *nature and substance*, the Son declared, in terms not to be mistaken but by the most wilful blindness; ‘ I and my Father are one;’¹—‘ He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.’² His *union with the Father in divine perfections*, and in *design, will, and operation*, he declared, with equal plainness, in many conversations with his disciples, and in many disputes with the Jews. A remarkable instance of this we find in the vth chapter of John. The Jews had accused him of breaking the Sabbath; to which accusation he briefly replied, ‘ My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,’³—a reply which the Jews rightly construed into a claim of *equality with God*,—a claim to act unrestricted by the laws enacted for creatures, and without giving account of his actions. It implied also, that, as the Father, though he rested on the Sabbath from his work of Creation, continued on that, as well as every other day, the work of sustaining and governing the universe; so the Son had all along co-operated with him in those great works, and had an equal right to carry on, on the Sabbath-day, his work of Mercy and Redemption. This reply enraged the Jews, because they perceived in it a claim to be the Son of God, in so high and peculiar a sense, as could not, without blasphemy, have been claimed by any mere man. And how did our Lord explain this claim? Not by modifying it in the least; but, on the contrary, by asserting his power and authority, not only to do works *similar* to those of the Fa-

¹ John x. 30.

² John xiv. 9.

³ John v. 17, 18.

ther, but the *self-same* works. Many of the highest acts of Deity we find ascribed, at one time to the Father, and at another to the Son; such as the Resurrection of the body of Christ. This is generally ascribed to the Father; but Jesus declared *he had power* to lay down his life, and he had *power to take it again.*¹ The preservation of his sheep he promised, on the ground that no man was able to pluck them out of *his Father's* hand: but he had just before said, that no man should pluck them out of *his own* hand.² The same is observable in his promises with regard to the hearing of prayer, and to the sending of the Comforter. In general, he referred his disciples to *the Father*, for answers to their petitions; but sometimes he undertook to answer them *himself*; ‘If ye shall ask any thing in my name, *I will do it.*³’ So he at one time promised that *the Father* would send the Spirit in his name; and, at another time said, ‘If I depart, *I will send him unto you.*⁴’ And although there is an apparent confession of inferiority, in the saying, ‘The Son *can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do;*⁵’ this saying, combined with the declarations of equality above quoted, only proves the perfect harmony and unity between the Sacred Persons; that it is impossible the Son should act differently from the Father, when in counsel, will, and action, they are *One.* The design of the Father, in committing power to the Son, as Mediator, to quicken, to judge, and to do all his works, was, ‘that all men should honour the Son, *even as they honour the Father.*⁶

While, however, we zealously maintain that the title Son is one of essential Deity, belonging to the Redeemer, as one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the unity

¹ John x. 17, 18.

² John x. 28, 29.

³ John xiv. 14.

⁴ John xvi. 7.

⁵ John v. 19.

⁶ John v. 23.

of the blessed Trinity, we readily allow that the relation between the Sacred Persons seems to be revealed to man chiefly on account of the different parts they perform in the work of redemption ; or, that perhaps, that work has been performed, partly for the sake of displaying and glorifying the distinction of Persons in the Godhead.

The features of Sonship, to which we have hitherto referred, describe the *Divine Nature* of the Son ; those to which we now turn, seem to describe more his *official character as Christ*. For, when it is said that the Son is the Partner of the Father's counsels, and the Object of his love and delight, this seems to refer, not to his Omnipotence as a Divine Being, and to the exalted and ineffable delight which the Sacred Persons must ever have had in each other ; but to the confidence and love shown by the Father to the Son, in his character of *Mediator* ; as when it is said, ‘ The Father *loveth* the Son, and *showeth him* all things that himself doeth ; ’—‘ the Father *loveth* the Son, and *hath given* all things into his hand.’ We have seen that it was in anticipation of his mediatorial work, that, under the name of Wisdom, the Son declared he had been from eternity the *delight* of the Father ;¹ it was to seal and own his ministry, that the voice from heaven proclaimed, at his Baptism, and at his Transfiguration, ‘ This is my *beloved Son*, in whom I am *well pleased*.’² And the Son himself declared, ‘ Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.’³

In the remaining features of Sonship, there can be no doubt but the *official character* of the Son, as Christ, is represented. It is as Mediator that he is, and has ever been, the *Remealer* and *Representative* of the Father, his *Agent* in all his works, and his *Heir*. We have seen that, in

¹ Prov. viii. 30. ² Mat. iii. 17 ; xvii. 5. ³ John x. 17.

ancient times, the only begotten Son, in various forms, *declared* the Father to mankind ; appearing sometimes in the angelic, sometimes in the human form, and ever acting as the Eternal Word. ‘ But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son,’ to continue for many years on earth, as his Revealer and Representative, clearly and brightly to manifest his character, will, and perfections to men. That the Jews *expected* the Messiah, under the character of Son of God, is evident, from the confession of Nathanael,¹ of Simon Peter,² of the centurion, and others, at the time of our Lord’s death;³ from the adjuration of the High Priest;⁴ and from many other particulars to be collected hereafter.

Meantime let us consider, how truly, in his Ministerial character, the Lord Jesus *represented* his Father, acted as a Son sent on an especial mission by his Father ; and, at the same time, claimed the most endeared and intimate fellowship with him ; the most entire intercommunity of interest, property, and glory. He truly came *in his Father’s name*; he *spake the words*, and *did the works* of his Father ; he *sought not his own will*, but *the will of the Father* who sent him. But so close did he describe the union, so perfect the communion, between himself and the Father, that he who had *seen the One*, had *seen the Other*; he who *knew the Son*, *knew the Father* also : indeed no man could know either the Father or the Son, except as they were revealed by each other ; no man could come to the Father, but by the Son ; nor could any man come to the Son, but by the drawing of the Father.

There can be no competition of interest or glory here ; for all things that the Father hath are the Son’s ; all that the Son hath are the Father’s ; those that love the Son, are beloved of the Father ; they that serve Christ will the

¹ John i. 49. ² Mat. xvi. 17. ³ Mat. xxvii. 54. ⁴ Mat. xxvi. 63.

Father honour ; whereas he that hateth the Son hateth the Father also ; and this so greatly enhances the guilt of all unbelievers, from the time of Christ's coming to the present day, that now they have both seen and hated both the Son and the Father. In short, by the work of redemption, the Father glorified the Son, that the Son also might glorify him.

There is yet another important sense, in which Christ is the *Son of God*; viz. his being '*Heir of all things.*'¹ 'As 'God's Son, he has an eqnal right to all things with his 'Father ; as Mediator, he hath his Elect, and all things 'given into his hand, to dispose of for their good.'² A rich inheritance was promised by the Father to his Anointed Son, in the records of ancient prophecy ; 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine *inheritance*, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.'³ Accordingly, when the Son appeared on earth, he appropriated to himself the character of *Heir* ; of the only and beloved Son of the Lord of the vineyard, sent by him to receive of its fruits, but slain by the wicked husbandmen.⁴—And, after the exaltation of the Mediator, he was declared by inspired writers to have taken possession of his *appointed inheritance* ; to have *obtained by inheritance* a name more excellent than the angels.⁵ We know, that as the eternal JEHOVAH, the Son has ever been infinitely exalted above the highest creatures : this superiority to angels must therefore refer to the exaltation of his human nature ; to his being raised, in reward of his obedience and sufferings, far above all principality, and power, and dominion ; to his being invested, as *Mediator*, with all the riches, honours, and authority of his Father, to dispose of all things for the good of his church.

¹ Heb. i. 2.

² Brown's Dictionary of the Holy Bible.

³ Ps. ii. 8.

⁴ Mat. xxi. 38.

⁵ Heb. i. 2-4.

How vast, how deep, and comprehensive is this title, which, at first sight, appeared so simple ! It includes the *original dignity* of our blessed Lord, as, ‘ over all, God blessed for ever,’ his *voluntary abasement*, as the *Ineरnate Son of the Father*, and his *subsequent exaltation*, as the appointed *Heir of all things*.

It is of unspeakable importance that we entertain a right belief in the Sonship of Christ : for on this depends our whole state before God, our whole prospects for eternity. For the Holy Ghost has declared, ‘ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.’¹ ‘ Whoso denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father ;’² but ‘ he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.’³

Important as this faith is, we cannot acquire it by our own power, nor impart it to one of our fellow-sinners. He alone who revealed to Simon Bar-jona that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, can reveal it in a saving manner to us ; even the Father, which is in heaven. And blessed indeed is every one to whom this revelation is vouchsafed. For, ‘ by faith in Christ Jesus,’ *we ourselves become*, in a subordinate sense, ‘ *the children of God* :’⁴ ‘ and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ;’ we are restored to all the privileges and immunities of God’s children, which we forfeited by the Fall ; and ‘ united to Christ, and by ‘ virtue of his death, we have the most free and honourable title to all the promises, blessings, creatures, and ‘ fulness of God.’⁵

But be it remembred, that if we would have a well-

¹ John iii. 36.

² 1 John ii. 23.

³ 2 John. 9.

⁴ Gal. iii. 26.

⁵ Brown’s Dictionary of the Holy Bible.

grounded hope of the inheritance of God's children hereafter, we must have some evidences of adoption into his family here: if we would have the privileges of the sons of God, we must also have their character. We must be followers of God, as dear children, be conformed to the image of his Son, and have the witness of the Spirit, that we are the children of God. We must receive the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: then shall we know on good grounds that we are no more servants, but sons; and if sons, then heirs of God through Christ.¹ The more we come out, and are separate, from an ungodly world, for Christ's sake, the clearer will be our evidences that the Lord Almighty is our Father, and that we are his sons and daughters.²

Finally, we would say to all, 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.' And may this effect follow our meditations, that henceforth we may more intelligently, and with more heartfelt earnestness, pray for grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.³

' Sing we to our God above
' Praise eternal as his love;
' Praise him all ye heavenly host,
' Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

¹ Gal. iv. 6, 7. ² 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. ³ 2 John 3.

ESSAY VIII.

IMMANUEL—OR GOD WITH US—OR GOD ON OUR SIDE.

OF all the names whereby God the Son has been pleased to reveal himself, there is not one, perhaps, which yields to believers so rich a fund of comfort and delight, as this of IMMANUEL. How vast, comprehensive, and encouraging is its meaning! expressing, in one word, the great ‘mystery of godliness,’ GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH : combining, in one word, all the infinite perfections of the Godhead, with all the sympathies and tender ties of Manhood. ‘Take away his *humanity*,’ says Hurrian, ‘and he has no sacrifice to offer ; take away his *Deity*, ‘and the merit of his sacrifice is destroyed, his intercession made void, and our salvation overturned at once. ‘Take away the doctrine of Christ’s *person*, and the gospel scheme is a mere confused heap ; and without his ‘righteousness, his grace, and spirit, we should, in law ‘and nature, all be dead towards God, and certainly shut ‘out from eternal life. We have reason then to love and ‘value him, to stand up for his Deity and Divine Personality ; for take away these, and we lose our God, and ‘our salvation ; and what have we more?’

The name Immanuel occurs only three times in the Bible : viz. in Isaiah vii. 14, where the miraculous con-

ception of the Saviour is foretold ;—‘ Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel ;’ in the chapter following, where the land which had been so long under the rule and protection of the Son of God, and which was to be honoured with his personal presence, as God-Man, is called Immanuel’s land ;¹ and in the first of Matthew, where the former prediction is directly applied to the Infant-Saviour, and the name interpreted ;—‘ Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Immanuel ; which, being interpreted, is, God with us.’²

This name IMMANUEL might stand for the general title of the work in which we are engaged. It embraces the whole substance of what we endeavoured in the First Part, to prove, viz. That our Redeemer being God, all the attributes of the Godhead, which must otherwise have been *against* us, are, if by faith we are united to Him, engaged *on our side*. It embraces, also, all we have been endeavouring to prove in this Second Part, viz. That the Second Person of the Holy Trinity has been from the beginning *God with men* ; the Agent of revelation, counsel, guidance, protection, government, and salvation, to the people of God. And this blessed name embraces, also, all we have to say of Christ to his people, in the remainder of our work ; for every office he sustains, every grace he bestows, derives its power, value, and efficacy, from his being Immanuel. Since, then, it is the design of this whole work to show forth the glories of Immanuel, we shall be the more brief in the particular consideration of the title, merely offering a few remarks on the three senses in which it may be taken ; 1st, as

¹ Is. viii. 8.

² Mat. i. 22, 23.

GOD WITH US, or *God in our nature*; 2d, as GOD WITH US, or *God on our side*; 3d, as GOD WITH US, or *God dwelling with us*.

1st, First, let us dwell for a moment on the astonishing fact, that the glorious Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth, did really assume human nature, in conjunction with the Divine, and condescend not only to wear it during his state of abasement, and then cast it off as a garb of degradation; but to bear it up with him to the highest heavens, as a robe of triumph, which he was to wear for ever. ‘God! what more glorious! Flesh! what more vile! God dwelling in the flesh! what more wonderful!’ saith Augustine.¹ How unspeakable is the honour thus conferred on our fallen race! What a pledge is thus given of God’s willingness to restore that race to bliss and to glory!

2d, For, secondly, *wherefore* did the mighty God become ‘GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH?’ It was that he might become *God on our side*; and, as far as we can judge, no other being in the universe could have accomplished the stupendous work of man’s redemption, but One who was both God and Man. ‘It was impossible for any but a *divine Person* to be a Mediator, Redeemer, Surety, Prophet, Priest, and King, to meet the revolted, lost, ignorant, and rebellious condition of fallen man; nor was it less necessary that this Divine Person should assume *the nature of the transgressors*, and therein execute the whole work of their redemption.² Nothing can be more delightful than to observe in what respects the personal conjunction of the divine and human natures is necessary to the exercise of every office, the sustaining of every relation, and the standing in every

¹ Hurrian’s Sermons.

² Rom. viii. 3, 4; Gal. iv. 4, 5.

‘ state, proper for our blessed Redccmer.’¹ This delightful task is the one we are privileged to undertake ; by showing, in the future parts of this work, in what form and manner the Redecmer appeared on earth, and the offices and relations, to exercise and sustain which, he became ‘ manifest in the flesh.’

• 3d, Meantime, there is, thirdly, a delightful sense in which we may take the name IMMANUEL,—viz. as *God dwelling with us*. We have seen that from eternity the Word, or Wisdom, had his delights with the sons of men ; and that, as the Angel-Jehovah, he often visited his saints, and admitted them to commune with him with astonishing nearness and freedom ; and, to show his willingness to assume our nature, did frequently appear in the form of a Man. But when he actually became Incarnate, this communion with men was consequently much more intimate and familiar : Immanuel dwelt with men on the earth, and conversed with them face to face, as a man speaketh with his frienld. Are we not sometimes inclined to envy those who had the high honour and privilege of communing with God in our nature ? Yet the disciples experienced more blessed communion with their Lord, after the withdrawing of his bodily presence, in the rich manifestations of his spiritual presence, which, according to his promise, he vouchsafed to them. And similar manifestations are promised to, and experienced by, the true disciples of Immanuel, in every age. Ungodly men may deride, as enthusiastic, the aspirations of the saints after a lively sense of God’s presence, or their devout acknowledgments of the enjoyment of His presence ; but that cannot be enthusiasm, which agrees exactly with the promises of Christ to his disciples ; such as, ‘ He that hath my com-

¹ Brown’s Dictionary of the Holy Bible.

mandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.¹ ‘ If a man love me, he will keep my words ; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.’² Jesus promised to uphold and preserve his disciples, not only by a secret indwelling, unknown to themselves ; but that they should *know* that they were in him, and he in them.³ He invites them to taste the richest delights in communion with himself ; saying, ‘ Behold, I stand at the door and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.’⁴ These promises were abundantly fulfilled in the experience of the early Christians. They *knew* that Jesus Christ abode in them, by the Spirit which he gave them :⁵ they *knew* that God dwelt in them, and they in him, because he had given them of his Spirit :⁶ they *knew* that the Son of God was come, and had given them an understanding, that they might know him that was true : yea, they *knew* that they were in him that is true, even in Jesus Christ.⁷

And what wonders has the presence of Immanuel wrought in every succeeding age of the church ! Upheld and supported by him, his people have bravely encountered their fiercest adversaries, and encouraged each other to the conflict ; saying, ‘ Their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us ; fear them not.’⁸ The countenance of Immanuel, lifted up upon his people, has given light in the darkest dungeon, tranquillity in the raging tempest, dauntless courage and fortitude in the prospect and in the endurance of the most agonizing sufferings, whether from the hand of man or of God.

¹ John xiv. 21. ² John xiv. 23. ³ John xiv. 20. ⁴ Rev. iii. 20.

⁵ 1 John iii. 24. ⁶ 1 John iv. 13. ⁷ 1 John v. 20. ⁸ Numb. xiv. 9.

Through the strength of their ever-present God, they have been enabled to meet death in every shape, whether in the appalling terrors of martyrdom, or in the lingering progress of disease and decay, not only with composure, but with joy and triumph ; knowing and feeling that *God* was *with them*, in all the senses above mentioned ; *with them*, by sharing their *nature*, and thus sympathizing in their every sorrow ; *with them*, as employing all his divine perfections *on their side* ; *with them* in the sweet tokens of his special *presence*, which, in their hour of need, he most richly bestows.

To creatures such as we are, helpless, exposed to danger on every side, and entirely dependant upon God, what question can possibly be so interesting and momentous as, Whether God be *on our side*, or *against us*? ‘ If God be for us, who can be against us ? ’ And, if God be against us, who can be for us ? Multitudes, it is feared, give themselves little concern regarding this question, and take it as a thing of course, that God is on their side, because God has assumed their nature. It is a blessed truth, indeed, that by the incarnation, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Son of God in our nature, every man living has the strongest possible warrant to come to God for salvation, and the strongest possible assurance of God’s *willingness* to be on his side ; but, alas ! it does not follow as a thing of course that God *is* on his side ; on the contrary, all this may only serve to deepen his condemnation.

How, then, can we ascertain our own state, with regard to this solemn question ? Two tests whereby to ascertain it naturally arise out of what has been said ; 1st, We may know that God is on our side, if we are on his side ; 2d, We may know it by the value we set upon his presence.

First, *Are we on God's side?* Many think it enough if they do not oppose the cause of God, and flatter themselves that they are occupying a safe neutral position. Fully engrossed by their own concerns, and those of the world, they have neither time nor inclination to take part in the great contest that is carrying on between the hosts of God and those of Satan. But do men act thus in regard to contests of another kind? When their country is invaded by a hostile nation, or when civil dissensions break out within their own land, do they think it enough not to join the ranks of the enemy? Although all cannot bear arms as trained warriors, are not the hearts of all engaged on one side or the other, and the hands of all ready, as occasion offers, to advance that cause to which they are attached? Does not every individual so identify his own cause with that of his confederates, as to rejoice in every instance of their success, and mourn over every occasion of their defeat, as though it affected his private and personal interests? In every contest between men, indeed, there must be a large mixture of error on each side; and a conscientious mind may often be forced to remain neutral, and a Christian will ardently desire their peaceful termination. But, in the contest between heaven and hell, between holiness and sin, between God and the Devil, neutrality would be criminal, were it possible. We say, *were it possible*, for in fact it is not so. There is no individual who has not some influence in the diffusion either of good or evil; and the more moral and amiable we are, while destitute of a vital principle of godliness, the deeper injury we do to the cause of the Gospel, by leading men to believe they can be virtuous and happy ‘without God in the world.’ And although we may not have it in our power to engage in active services for the cause of Immanuel,

we may yet discover, in our minds, such a deep interest in that cause, as shall assure us that we are on his side. For instance, we shall grieve for the declensions of the church, long for her revival, joyfully hail any symptoms of returning zeal and purity in her members, and anxiously watch over her interests, as though they were our own. We shall be grieved for the affliction of Joseph,¹ and prefer Jerusalem above our chief joy.² And if such be our secret emotions, we shall find some means, however small, of proving them in action. It is one of the features of the present age, that it confounds these two opposite sides, so that it is often impossible to discover to which of them men belong. Perhaps the days may not be far distant, when the cry shall be made, ‘Who is on the Lord’s side, who?’ and when adherence to that side shall require more than the passive acquiescence, the calm neutrality, with which professed Christians at present content themselves. If these days should come in our time, oh! may we be found on the Lord’s side, though it be with ‘the loss of all things.’

But, *secondly*, we are to test the Lord’s being *on our side*, by inquiring *in what estimation we hold his presence*. It is one mark of an unrenewed state, that we secretly say to God, ‘Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.’ But, after we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, our continual cry is, ‘Oh! when wilt thou come unto me?’ ‘Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.’ We henceforth value his manifested presence above all earthly joys, and mourn his absence more than all earthly griefs; at least, it betrays a very low state of grace when this is not the case. If, then, it be our chief delight to enjoy such glimpses of God’s bless-

¹ Amos vi. 6.

² Ps. cxxxvii. 6.

ed countenance, as our present state permits, we need not fear that he will hereafter gather our souls with the blood-thirsty ; but may joyfully look forward to seeing the King in his beauty, without a cloud between, in the land that is very far off, and being ever *with the Lord*.

Finally, let it be our most earnest desire and prayer, for ourselves, and all belonging to us, that ‘the Lord Jesus may be with our spirit,’ for it is only through ‘the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,’ that we can enjoy ‘the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.’

PART III.

TITLES DESCRIPTIVE OF THE INCARNATION AND HUMILIATION OF THE SON.

ESSAY IX.

THE CHILD JESUS.

WE have now gone through two divisions of our work. In the First, we dwelt upon the glorious titles of Deity which belong to our blessed Lord and Saviour, and prove him to be possessed of all divine perfections, equally with the Father and the Holy Ghost. In the Second, we have dwelt upon those wonderful titles which belong exclusively to the Son in his divine nature, and prove not only his essential Deity, but the peculiar agency which, as at once God and Mediator, he has in all ages exercised over the affairs of men ; manifesting himself in so many marvellous ways,—as ‘the Ruler in Israel from everlasting,’ as ‘the Angel of JEHOVAH,’ and yet JEHOVAH himself ; accepting and claiming divine honours, and governing the vast economy of nature, of Providence, and of grace ; in anticipation of the more direct and entire government with which he was to be invested on his Incarnation, and still more fully on his Ascension.

In the latter part, we have caught some occasional glimpses of that which is now to occupy us, the HUMILIATION of our Redeemer ; but after all our anticipations, and all our previous familiarity with the great truth, that ‘ GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH,’ our astonishment, far from diminishing, increases, as we approach the actual study of his Incarnate state ; the mystery is so great, that avowed disbelief of it seems far more *rational*, than the cold, heartless, inefficient belief, which it obtains among professing Christians.

We do not at present enter upon the meaning of the name JESUS, which will be illustrated separately. Our simple object in this chapter is to collect the remarkable circumstances recorded of the INFANCY and CHILDHOOD of the Saviour ; and, by God’s help, to draw from them some practical improvement.

The fulness of the time at length came, when God was to send forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.¹ That eventful day at length dawned, which had been appointed in the counsels of Heaven from eternity past, and whose consequences were to reach through eternity to come. The exact period, foretold of God by his prophets, for the coming of Messiah, had arrived. The sceptre had well nigh departed from Judah ;² the ‘seventy weeks’ of Daniel drew to an end ;³ the nations had been ‘shaken’⁴ by the overthrow of the Persian and Grecian empires, and the erection of the Roman ; the second temple was still in its glory ; an alarming rumour, of the sudden rise of a Jew to govern the world, had spread through a great part of it, when, according to the promise delivered by

¹ Gal. iv. 4, 5.

² Gen. xlvi. 10.

³ Dan. ix. 24.

⁴ Haggai ii. 7-9.

Isaiah,¹ seven hundred years before, and repeated by the angel Gabriel,² just before its fulfilment, a virgin conceived and bare a son, and called his name Immanuel. Then the first promise to fallen man³ began to be fulfilled, by the birth of that Seed of the woman, which was to bruise the serpent's head; then appeared that Seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed; then came forth out of Bethlehem-Ephratah, he who was to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth had been from of old, from everlasting.⁴

' Christ, when he assumed our nature, assumed not only
' a true human body, but also a *true human soul*. If he
' only assumed a human body, and not a soul of the
' same species and kind with theirs, he must be unlike
' his brethren in one, and that the principal and essen-
' tial part of human nature. Was he made like man in
' all things, that only excepted which chiefly makes the
' man, even the soul? "If no satisfaction for the sins of
' men could be made but in the nature that sinned, then
' it was necessary for the Redeemer to assume our *whole*
' *nature*, soul as well as body."⁵ He gave body for
' bodies, soul for souls, as Irenæus is cited saying. He
' took the whole man, saith St Augustine, that he might
' save all that is in man from the plague of sin.'⁶

In tracing the circumstances which attended the Saviour's birth, we observe the same combination of external abasement with heavenly glory, which characterized his whole earthly pilgrimage. He, to whom belong the earth, and the fulness thereof, disdained all its pomps, declined all its comforts, and, exhibiting from the moment of his birth, the self-denial becoming his state of Humiliation, chose for his parent, one of low and indigent

¹ Is. vii. 14. ² Luke i. 26-35. ³ Gen. iii. 15. ⁴ Micah v. 2.

⁵ Dr Owen on Christ's person. ⁶ Hurrian's Sermons.

circumstances, although of the royal house of David ; for his first earthly abode, a stable ; and for his cradle, a manger. Yet this mean abode was distinguished by a new star pointing out its situation : the birth of this child was announced by a messenger from heaven, as ‘ tidings of great joy to all people ;’ and celebrated in the noblest anthem ever heard by mortal ear, a song of heaven brought down to earth, bursting forth from a multitude of the angelic host, who gave ‘ glory to God in the highest ’ for this event, beholding in it the opening of that dispensation, which would manifest all the perfections of the Godhead in the highest degree, and bring ‘ on earth peace, good-will toward men.’

From the time of the Saviour’s birth may also be traced that opposition of sentiment regarding him, and of conduct towards him, which continued during his whole earthly course, and continues to this day, dividing mankind, wherever the Gospel is known, into two distinct and opposite classes. While some devoutly worshipped the Holy Child, and presented to him the most preeious gifts, Herod, the first of his persecutors, sought his life with blood-thirsty cruelty, which, though averted from himself, involved a numerous band of infant martyrs. We say, the reception given to the Child Jesus divided men into *two* classes : now it may be thought by some that we overlook a *third* class, whieh was the most numerous of all, consisting of those who neither worshipped him, nor persecuted him ; neither contradicted the evidences of his Messiahship, nor yet took pains to examine them. Of this class were the chief priests and scribes, who, in full assembly, replied to the question of Herod, as to the birth-place of Christ, that in Bethlehem of Judea he was to be born.¹ In this

¹ Mat. ii. 5.

class may be included ‘all Jerusalem ;’¹ for, when Herod ‘was troubled’ at the report of this Child’s birth, ‘all Jerusalem’ was troubled ‘with him.’ It appears, then, that an extraordinary sensation was caused in the city, and doubtless in the whole country, by this event,—a sensation which must have been heightened by the conversation of Anna, of Simeon, and of the shepherds ; for it is said of Anna, that she ‘spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem ;’ no doubt, Simeon would do the same ; and the shepherds, on finding the tidings of the angel verified, ‘made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.’ How was it, then, that this extraordinary sensation so quickly subsided ? That the chief priests and ‘all Jerusalem’ neglected to watch over the future history of this Child, in whose reported eminence they were so deeply interested ? And that, as soon as his character opened in Manhood, they, with few exceptions, joined in persecuting him ? Plainly, because they formed, not a third and neutral class, but essentially, and whenever their worldly interest was interfered with, a decided branch of the Herod class.

The guilt of these unbelievers will appear more manifest, when we contrast with it the faith of believers at the same period, and with access to the same evidences ; especially when we collect, from the testimony of saints and angels, the various declarations concerning this Child, which prove how clearly they understood, and how fully they made known, the dignity of his Person, his true Messiahship, and the spiritual nature of the deliverance he came to effect.

As to the *dignity of his person*, he was declared to be,

¹ Mat. ii. 3.

not only the *Son of God, Son of the Highest*, made incarnate by the Holy Ghost overshadowing the Virgin Mary, but he was *the Lord, the Lord God of Israel*; for this must be the sense of Gabriel's words concerning John the Baptist, ‘ Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to *the Lord their God*; and he shall go before *Him* in the spirit and power of Elias.’ He was also declared to be *Immanuel*, or *God with us*, and *God the Saviour*.¹

Then as to his *true Messiahship*, this Child was declared to be *Christ the Lord, the Lord's Christ, Jesus, a Saviour, the Horn of Salvation*, which God had promised to his people by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began, and in whom he was now about to perform the mercy, the covenant, and the oath, which he sware to Abraham. The *kingly authority* of Messiah was ascribed to this ‘ young child,’ in that he was styled *King of the Jews*, he that was to reign on the throne of David, and over the house of Jacob for ever, and of whose kingdom there was to be no end. Various other attributes of Messiah were ascribed to him, such as bringing to Israel, *consolation, redemption, glory*; to all people, *good tidings of great joy*; to the Gentiles, *light*.

At the same time, intimations were given that this kingly authority, this deliverance from enemies, this consolation, and glory, were of a *spiritual* nature, and could therefore only be valued by those who longed and waited for *spiritual* redemption. For his name was called *Jesus*, because he was to *save his people from their sins*: the enemies from which he was to deliver them were those which opposed their serving God without fear, in holiness and righteousness. And consequently, he would not be welcomed by the nation at large, but would be ‘ for the fall’ of many in Israel, as well as ‘ for

¹ See for these titles Mat. i. & ii., and Luke i. & ii.

the rising again' of others ; and, in general, be for ' a sign' that should be ' spoken against.'

From the period of Infancy to that of twelve years, nothing is recorded of the CHILD JESUS, but that he ' grew and waxed strong in spirit ; and the grace of God was upon him.' When he reached the age of twelve, he gave an interesting indication of his future character and office, in his conversation with the doctors in the temple, astonishing all that heard him by his understanding and answers. To the gentle rebuke of Joseph and Mary, for having caused them uneasiness, he gave the emphatic reply so characteristic of his whole earthly mission, ' Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ? ' But, in spite of this consciousness of his own dignity, as the eternal Son, and the Lord's Anointed, Jesus, with wonderful condescension, returned with his mother and his reputed father to Nazareth, and was ' subject unto them ; ' thus leaving to the young a bright example of filial submission, which can yield to no duty but that due to their Father in heaven.

Between this period, again, and the opening of his ministry, we have only this brief account of Jesus, that he ' increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.'

When attempting to draw practical instructions from the subject before us, whether we view the Incarnation of the Son generally, or his state of Childhood in particular, we are lost in wonder, and overwhelmed with a sense of the utter insufficiency of human language to express, and of human thought to conceive, so great a mystery. Again we repeat, that revolting and dreadful as is avowed infidelity on this subject, it is at least more rational, more consistent, than to say, we believe it, and yet not be moved by the consideration of such

unutterable condeseension to ardent gratitude, adoring praise, and devoted obedience, to Him who so loved us, as to leave his eternal throne in the heavens, to beeome a poor, neglected Infant upon earth. And did the essence of Deity indeed dwell in this Babe ? Were there concealed, under the form of helpless infancy, that power which made the earth, that wisdom which established the heavens ? Is this He, by whom, and for whom, all things were created, and by whom all things consist ? Can it be that this Infant, nourished and brought up like other infants, and protected from the puny vengeance of an earthly tyrant, not by miracle, but by being withdrawn from the scene of danger, can it be that this is the same awful and glorious Being who says, ‘ Yea, before the day was, I AM HE ; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand : I will work, and who shall let it ? ’ Is it possible that this Child, who received the initiatory sign of sin’s expiation, and of sin’s removal from the heart, was himself the Propitiation for our sins, was himself the Holy One ? Such knowledge is too wonderful for us ; it is high, we cannot attain unto it. ‘ Could we ‘ grasp all created beings, yet how vast, yea, impossible ‘ a leap must it be from thence to what is uncreated and ‘ infinite, with its operations and effects ! The work of ‘ our redemption, by the blood of the Son of God, himself ‘ condescending to be a man, that he might die for us, ‘ has in it heights above the reach, and depths beyond ‘ the fathom, of any mortal intellect, as one speaks.’¹

But there are other exercises besides admiration called for by this subject. It calls for self-examination, with regard to the reception we have individually given to the Saviour, and the feelings with which we contemplate his

¹ Dr South’s Sermons, quoted by Hurrian.

Incarnation. Do we sympathize, in any measure, with the exalted acclamations of the heavenly host, in honour of this great event, or even with the more humble strains of the shepherds, glorifying and praising God for all the things which we have heard and seen ? Are we, after the example of the Wise Men, offering to Jesus the homage of humble and grateful hearts, more precious in his sight than gold, sweeter to him than frankincense and myrrh ? Are we, like Mary, rejoicing in him as God our Saviour ; like Simeon, embracing him in the arms of faith for our own consolation and salvation, and rejoicing at the prospect of his universal and everlasting reign ? Or, are we, like the chief priests and ‘ all Jerusalem,’ while we possess much stronger evidence than they did of Jesus being the true Messiah, carelessly and coldly assenting to the fact of his having been born at Bethlehem, but taking no pains to examine what kind of Messiah he is, or what effect his birth has upon our own state and prospects ; pursuing our various plans with as little reference to this great event, as though it had never taken place, except inasmuch as it forms the era from which we date the events of this fleeting world ?

If the latter be our case, we may see an awful warning in the subject before us. By the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, every human being to whom the tidings reach, is placed in a situation of far deeper responsibility than could attach to those who lived before that event. The CHILD JESUS was ‘ set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel ;’ and all who are not, by faith in him, raised to the favour of God, and to newness of life, must fall into deeper condemnation, for resisting such astonishing offers of mercy, revealed with such clear light, and proved by such undeniable evidence. Although they be not open persecutors of Christ and his cause, he

considers them as enemies, and will deal with them accordingly.

We should draw example also from meditating on the Childhood of the Saviour. Did the Lord not only command his followers to become as little children, but actually become a little Child himself? Then let us earnestly pray, and sincerely desire, that our heart may not be haughty, nor our eyes lofty, but that our soul may be as a weaned child; that we may, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby, grow as Jesus did, in wisdom, and in favour with God and man; that like him, we may wax strong in spirit, and that the grace of God may be upon us.

Let us, then, like Mary, keep all these things, and ponder them in our hearts.

ESSAY X.

JESUS OF NAZARETH.

By the wonderful interposition of Providence, whereby God overrules all earthly events to the fulfilment of his own word and will, the decree of the heathen Emperor of Rome, that ‘all the world should be taxed,’ was made the means of accomplishing the prophecy, uttered so many ages before, that Christ should be born in Bethlehem. For it was necessary, by this decree, that every one should go to his own city; Joseph and Mary, therefore, being of the house of David, were obliged to travel a distance of sixty or seventy miles, from the city of Nazareth, where they dwelt, to Bethlehem; and thus their names, and probably that of the Infant Jesus, were enrolled in the public registers, as lineal descendants of the house of David.

But ‘when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.’¹ This return was, as St Matthew informs us, also the fulfilment of ancient prophecy, ‘he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.’²

Various interpretations are given of this passage, as it does not directly refer to any particular prediction.

¹ Luke ii. 39.

² Mat. ii. 23.

Some consider the word *Nazarene* as of the same import with *Nazarite*, and view Jesus as the Antitype of that typical order, in his being separated from sinners, and wholly consecrated to God.

Others derive the word *Nazareth* from *Netzar*, a branch, and suppose those prophecies to be referred to, in which Christ is promised under the title of THE BRANCH.

But the most satisfactory interpretation seems to be, that Christ came to dwell in Nazareth, not in fulfilment of any particular words of the prophets, but of their general intimations of the infamy and contempt which would be put upon him;¹ that he would be reputed vile and abject, be ‘ despised and rejected of men.’ How affecting, in this sense, is the name JESUS OF NAZARETH ! as expressive of the willingness of the Saviour to endure contempt and reproach for us ; which made him choose, as his first earthly home, a place so notorious for the wickedness of its inhabitants, as he knew must cast a stigma upon his own name ; nay, choosc it for the express purpose of bringing upon himself that stigma.

So strong was the prejudice entertained by the Jews against Nazareth, that it affected even the candid mind of Nathanael. When Philip joyfully informed him that they had found the Messiah, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph ; Nathanael replied, ‘ Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth ?² His coming from Nazareth in Galilee furnished to the Jews in general, a pretext for rejecting him. When some of the people, impressed by his heavenly doctrine, and wonderful miracles, said, ‘ Of a truth this is the prophet,’ and ‘ others said, This is the Christ,’ their obstinate countrymen objected, ‘ Shall Christ come out of Galilee !

¹ Is. liii. 2, 3 ; xlix. 7. ; Ps. xxii. 6. &c.

² John i. 46.

Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?’¹ A little investigation would have proved to these objectors, that Jesus of Nazareth was born at Bethlehem, and of the seed of David.

Another instance of the ignorant prejudice entertained by the Jews against the country of Galilee, is mentioned by St John. In an assembly of the chief priests and Pharisees, Nicodemus, ventured to oppose the rash judgment pronounced on Jesus, by asking, ‘ Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?’ But they cut short the discussion, with this taunting reply, ‘ Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.’² In this assertion they exposed their own ignorance of Scripture; for Isaiah had expressly mentioned Galilee as a region whose inhabitants were to see the great Light;³ and this prediction is alluded to by St Matthew, as fulfilled by the removal of Jesus from Nazareth to Capernaum.⁴

The blind infatuation of the Jews is still farther evident, from their using, as a term of infamy and disgrace, that very name which distinguished Him who bore it as a worker of the most astonishing miracles. It was when he knew that ‘ Jesus of Nazareth passed by,’⁵ that blind Bartimeus confidently applied to him for a cure. It was by this name he was distinguished, when, in his unostentatious triumph, he entered Jerusalem, and ‘ all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?’ and the multitude, justifying their hosannas, said, ‘ This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.’⁶ Under this name also, the evil spirits acknowledged his Supreme Power, and deprecated his wrath, saying, ‘ Let us alone; what have

¹ John vii. 40–42.

² John vii. 50–53.

³ Is. ix. 1, 2.

⁴ Mat. iv. 13–16.

⁵ Mark x. 47.

⁶ Mat. xxi. 11.

we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ?¹ Art thou come to destroy us ? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.'

Did we not know the enmity of the human heart to holiness, and the false notions it entertains of true greatness, we might have expected that, however the blessed Jesus was despised and hated by the nation at large, his fellow-citizens of Nazareth, who had witnessed the growing wisdom and virtue that adorned him, from Infancy to Manhood, would have better appreciated his worth, and gloried in their relation to him. On the contrary, he met with more obstinate unbelief, and more cruel violence, from the people of Nazareth, than from any others whom he visited ; although he vouchsafed to them a more explicit declaration of his Messiahship, than he gave in any other audience. After his glory had been displayed, and a fame of him spread abroad through all the region round about, he returned, in the power of the Spirit, into Galilee, and 'came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up.' There, officiating in the synagogue, he opened the book, and found the place where that striking prophecy of Isaiah is written, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek,'² &c. ; and, on closing the book, he, in the clearest terms, appropriated to himself the office described by the prophet, of the Lord's Anointed, or Messiah, saying, 'This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.' A momentary admiration followed this discourse. 'They all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.'³ 'Many, hearing him, were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things ? And what wisdom is this

¹ Mark i. 24.

² Is. lxi. 1-3.

³ Luke iv. 16-22.

which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are done by his hands?’¹ But to what result did this wonder and astonishment lead? Instead of drawing, from his want of the usual advantages of education, the obvious conclusion, that his wisdom came directly from above, they drew from this, and other circumstances belonging to his low station, a pretext for despising and rejecting him; saying, ‘Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and they were offended at him.’ The proverb was truly exemplified that ‘No prophet is accepted in his own country.’ Nor did Jesus see fit to work miracles at Nazareth, in order to convince his obstinate countrymen. On the contrary, he asserted his sovereign right to perform acts of mercy in particular places only, even as God had done in ancient times: and this claim so enraged the people, that ‘they rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.’

Jesus, miraculously passing through the midst of them, went his way, probably never to return; and thus the people of Nazareth despised and persecuted the Lord’s Anointed, and cast from them the peculiar advantages with which they were favoured, for becoming acquainted with him. Their unbelief was so remarkable, that, it is said, Jesus ‘marvelled at it;’ and that, for this reason, ‘he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.’

The name Nazarene was applied also to the followers of Christ, as a term of the deepest infamy and reproach. At the time of our Lord’s apprehension, suspicion fell on Peter, because it could be said of him, ‘and thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.’ When Stephen, the first

¹ Mark vi. 2.

Christian martyr, was condemned to die, this was the only crime imputed to him :—‘ We have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.’¹ And when Tertullus, in the name of the Jewish nation, accused Paul before Felix, as a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition, he added, as the heaviest crime laid against him, that he was ‘ a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.’²

In a far different sense was this name used by apostles, by a holy angel, and by the Lord Jesus himself. Far differently is it esteemed by all those who account the reproach of Christ greater riches than the honours and treasures of a perishing world. The apostle Peter, after the ascension of his Master, fearlessly declared that Jesus of Nazareth was ‘ a man approved of God,’³ among those whom he addressed, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of them, as they themselves also knew. In performing the cure of the impotent man, the same apostle invoked the Almighty power of the Saviour, under this name, saying, ‘ In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk ;’⁴ and when, before the Sanhedrim, Peter and John were summoned to answer, by what power and by what name they had done this ? they boldly declared that Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom their judges had crucified, was the author of this good deed, and that His was the only name under heaven, whereby any man could be saved.⁵ The angel who appeared to the women at the empty sepulchre of the Saviour, intimated that they who seek Jesus of Nazareth, have nothing to fear :—‘ Be not affrighted ; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified : he is risen ; he is not here.’⁶ Yea, the risen and glorified Redeemer

¹ Acts vi. 14.

² Acts xxiv. 5.

³ Acts ii. 22.

⁴ Acts iii. 6.

⁵ Acts iv. 10–12.

⁶ Mark xvi. 6.

was himself not ashamed to own this name of humiliation. He arrested Saul the persecutor, in his furious career ; and, speaking in the name of his poor suffering followers, said, ‘ I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.’¹ We will only adduce one more application of this title. By the overruling of Providence, it was affixed to the cross. ‘ Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS ; and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin ;’² that is, in all the languages then understood in Judea ; that it might be published to all the world, and remembered to all generations, that this despised Galilean, crucified as a malefaetor, was indeed the long-expected King, who was to reign over the Jews, and over all the true Israel, thenceforth and for ever.

What new wonders appear in this view of the divine Redeemer ! Indeed, under whatever aspect we view him, WONDERFUL seems the name most appropriate to his person, his character, and his work. When we contemplate ‘ his majestic lowliness, and his lowly majesty, his infinite highness, and his matchless condescension, his absolute sovereignty, and his unparalleled humility,’³ our minds are so overwhelmed, that we feel as if silent admiration were the only offering we could dare to present. Yet we would be encouraged in our attempts to honour this great and wonderful Saviour, by recollecting how graciously he drew near to his poor disciples of old, while they communed together concerning the things which happened to Jesus of Nazareth.

Although their views were dark, and their faith weak, he did not despise their desire for further knowledge of him ; but expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures,

¹ Acts xxii. 8.

² John xix. 19.

³ Andrew Gray.

the things concerning himself, made their hearts to burn within them, while he talked with them by the way ; and, at their earnest request, went in to tarry with them. In dependance, then, upon His teaching and guidance, who is ‘ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,’ we humbly proceed to draw instruction from this title of the Saviour.

And first, what thanks can be rendered unto the eternal Son of God, in that ‘ though he was rich,’ oh ! how infinitely rich ! though he was honoured by thousands and tens of thousands of holy angels, and worthy of the united praises and homage of the whole universe ; yet, ‘ for our sakes he became poor,’ despised, and hated, that we, through his poverty and shame, might inherit durable, yea, everlasting riches and honour. How amazing the thought, that He, whose glory fills the heavens, whose Almighty hand guides, with unerring skill, the movements of universal Nature, whose power and wisdom regulate the rise and fall of empires, and whose absolute decree determines the eternal state of every human soul,—that He did actually dwell as Man, in an obscure town of Judea, unknown to public fame for so many years, pursuing, as is supposed, a laborious occupation for his daily subsistence : and that when he did make himself known to the world it was not in any form of dignity or greatness ; but under a name of contempt, purposely acquired during his retirement.

How are we to account for the obstinate unbelief of the Jews ? Was not the lowly condition of Jesus, combined with his glorious deeds, an exact fulfilment of the words of their prophets whom they professed to reverence and believe ? It certainly was : but the Jews were, by the just judgment of God, given up to the dominion of their own prejudiced notions of Messiah’s kingdom.

They shut their eyes to all the humiliating predictions regarding it, and looked only at those of its greatness ; mistaking, in their carnal minds, spiritual for temporal greatness. Therefore they could not recognise, in Jesus of Nazareth, their promised Deliverer and King.

But does this title minister no reproof to us who profess to be the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth ? Have none of us thought less highly of him, because he humbled himself so low for us ? Have none of us entertained prejudices against the humbling doctrines and self-denying requirements of his Gospel, and selected only those which agree with our own carnal imaginations ?

It is true, in this highly favoured land, few dare openly to brand the Saviour or his followers with a name of infamy : an outward profession of attachment to him is rather essential to good fame ; and even a serious profession has become creditable. Yet for all this, if we would really be conformed to Christ, in spirit, in temper, and in pursuits, we must expect to be distinguished by some name equivalent to that of Nazarene. Alas ! most professing Christians are more like the citizens of Nazareth, in their connexion with Jesus, than like the *Sect* called ‘ the Sect of the Nazarenes.’ It consists more in the familiarity of early associations, than in the ardent attachment which binds to his service, and makes reproach sweet, for his sake. Like the men of Nazareth, we have been favoured, above all other people, with opportunities of knowing Jesus. He has, as it were, trod the streets of our towns and villages, and made himself familiar to every individual amongst us. But where are the fruits ? Alas ! it is feared, if our Pastors were to draw up an annual report of their success, of the number truly converted, and the number walking consistently with their profession, the report, when compared even with those of labourers in

Heathen lands, and compared with our superior advantages, would be sorrowful indeed. What sort of converts would the faithful Missionary esteem many in this land, who yet never dream of doubting their own Christianity? Alas! he would weep over them, as over those who had got the name indeed, but took no pains to acquire the character of Christians; who were walking in the broad way, worshipping idols still; and were ready, whenever their favourite sins were attacked, to despise and insult Jesus of Nazareth. Alas! It may be truly said of our land, as of Nazareth, that Jesus *cannot* do many mighty works here, because of our unbelief; save that he lays his hands upon a few sick souls and heals them. May our souls be of that few: May we fearlessly avow our adherence to Jesus, and our regard to his authority, to whatever ridicule or contempt it may expose us: and cheerfully bear reproach for Him, who bore it for us, in so wonderful a manner.

Lord Jesus, pardon all our sinful compliances with the world, and all our neglect of Thee, in time past. Let us not be of the world even as Thou wert not; but may we so confess Thee before men, that hereafter Thou mayest confess us before Thy Father in heaven.

ESSAY XI.

SON OF MAN.

THE title ‘son of man,’ was sometimes given to prophets, as to Ezekiel¹ and Daniel ;² and when so given, it might be understood as one of mingled honour and humiliation ; distinguishing the person addressed, as a highly favoured ‘son of man ;’ and at the same time reminding him, that, notwithstanding all the revelations vouchsafed to him, he was still a frail, sinful child of Adam.

Applied to the Redeemer, this title is also one of mingled signification ; expressive of the deep abasement to which the Son of God submitted in becoming the SON OF MAN ; and yet, distinguishing him with peculiar honour, as Chief of all the sons of Adam, and the only one who was free from sin, and well pleasing to God on his own account.

Under this name, the Messiah was described by prophets of old : Ezekiel,³ Daniel,⁴ and Zechariah,⁵ had august visions of him as Man, and the Son of Man, yet JEHOVAH. David also spake of him as the Son of Man.⁶ But what gives to this name a peculiar and touching interest is, that it was the one generally appropriated by

¹ Ezek. ii. 1, &c.

² Dan. viii. 17.

³ Ezek. i.

⁴ Dan. vii. 13.

⁵ Zech. i.

⁶ Ps. lxxx. 17.

our beloved Master himself, during his incarnate state, and seldom applied to him by others. As the Son of Man, Jesus avowed the low and suffering outward condition to which he submitted: as Son of Man he claimed such divine perfections as proved him, at the same time, Son of God: and, as Son of Man also, he made known his Mediatorial authority, honours, and offices. Let us dwell for a little on each of these three significations, that we may be prepared more intelligently to answer the question put by Jesus to his disciples, ‘ Whom say ye that I, the Son of Man, am ?’¹

But, 1st, generally, what is implied in this title, as expressive of the *Incarnation* of the Son? To what did it subject him? To infinite abasement doubtless; and to imputed guilt; but to no personal dishonour or contamination. Had his assumption of human nature involved the most distant approach to sin, or the slightest derogation of Divine glory, it had been impossible for the Son of God to assume it. But human nature is not essentially sinful, and opposed to God and to holiness. This fact may, in part, be gathered from the numerous Scripture expressions, wherein the members, faculties, and actions of the human body are used as emblems of the attributes, properties, and dispensations of God himself. His watchful care of his people is expressed by his *eye* being upon them; his patient attention to their prayers by his *bowing down his ear* to them; his Almighty power is termed the strength of his *right hand*; his proceedings are his *footsteps*. Any thing which he approves is said to be *pleasing in his eyes*, or as a *sweet smelling savour* unto him: he is said to *hide his face*, or to *show the light of his countenance*; to *sit to walk*, &c. And whereas in contrast to the fickleness and mutability of human nature, God is declared

¹ Mat. xvi. 13-15.

‘ not a man, that he should repent ;’ yet some properties of human nature, such as wisdom, courage, and activity, are so far emblematical of the perfections of the Almighty, that it is said, ‘ The Lord is a Man of war.’¹ Now, although these terms are of course highly figurative ; yet the use of them, as figures of the holy perfections of the Most High, proves, that depraved and degraded as human nature, to our experiencee, is, it is not necessarily, nor essentially so ; but may exist in union with the most perfect holiness and purity. Thus human nature existed at first, and thus, as to its holiness and purity, the Son of God assumed it : he bore, indeed, the guilt and curse brought upon man by the Fall ; he bore all the sinless infirmities consequent on the Fall ; but he contraeted no moral degradation nor defilement.

The *low and suffering outward condition*, to which the Lord Jesus submitted, is best described in his own words : ‘ The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests ; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.’² Yet, although so contented and resigned in his low estate, the Son of Man did not affect rigid austerity. He came ‘ eating and drinking,’ and so freely associating with men of all descriptions, as to draw upon him the reproach of being ‘ a friend of publicans and sinners.’³ In deportment, Jesus was ‘ fairer than the children of men ;’ his lips were full of grace ;⁴ his life was one eontinued series of kind and benevolent deeds : yet no son of man was ever so vilified, misrepresented, and abused ; so afflicted, by men, by devils, nay, at times, by God himself, as was this lovely and righteous Son of Man ; he was betrayed and condemned, mocked, spitted on, scourged, and crucified. Comparing, then, his unparalleled goodness with

¹ Exod. xv. 3.

² Mat. viii. 20.

³ Mat. xi. 19.

⁴ Ps. xlv. 2.

his unparalleled sufferings, are we not forced to inquire, ‘Who is this Son of Man?’¹

2d, But, *secondly*, if the consideration of the character and condition of Jesus, as *Man*, excites our admiring wonder, how must that wonder increase, when we attend to his own declarations of himself as *God!* When we hear him assert his own Omnipresence, by saying, that the Son of Man was in heaven, while conversing with his disciples on earth;² his own Omnipotence, by saying the Son of Man had power on earth, not only to heal the diseases of the body, but to forgive sins;³ his own Omniscience, by predicting the things that should befall him,⁴ as Son of Man. How clearly did he claim divine honours, by styling it blasphemy to speak a word against the Son of Man, and yet declaring such blasphemy to be pardonable;⁵ and by asserting his authority over instituted ordinances, saying, ‘The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day.’⁶ Reflecting on all these things, do we not now inquire, with growing earnestness, ‘Who is this Son of Man,’ who combines, in so wonderful a manner, the infirmities and sufferings of humanity, with the perfections and glory of Deity? The only answer to this question is, This is the Word made flesh,—The Man who is the Fellow of the Lord of Hosts.

3d, But for what great and marvellous purpose was this union of natures effected in the Son of Man? This brings us to the *third* signification of the title, viz. as expressing his *Mediatorial offices, authority, and honours*; that the Son of Man is the Christ, the Anointed Mediator, who came ‘to seek and to save that which was lost’;⁷ ‘not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and

¹ John xii. 34.

² John iii. 13.

³ Mark ii. 9–12.

⁴ Mat. xx. 17–19.

⁵ Mat. xii. 32.

⁶ Mat. xii. 3.

⁷ Luke xix. 10.

to give his life a ransom for many ;¹ to be ‘lifted up,’ like the serpent in the wilderness, for the healing of all ;² to become, like the manna in the desert, ‘the Bread of Life’ to all ;³ and to be, like the ladder seen by Jacob, upon which the angels of God ascended and descended,⁴ the only Channel of friendly communion between heaven and earth. Among the Jews, the title ‘Son of Man’ was understood as belonging to the Messiah : but they understood not the nature nor the manner of the deliverance their Messiah was to effect. Thus, on hearing Jesus declare that he must be ‘lifted up from the earth’ (signifying what death he should die), they answered, ‘We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever : and how sayest thou, The Son of Man must be *lifted up*? Who is this Son of Man?’⁵ They knew not that the cross and the grave were the appointed path through which Messiah was to pass to his kingdom. But Jesus himself plainly declared that thus the Son of Man was to be glorified ; and that after his death and resurrection, he should ‘ascend up where he was before,’ to receive the dominion, glory, and power, which were to reward his toils and pains ; especially, that the Father had given him authority to execute judgment also, because he was the Son of Man.⁶ For the purposes of judgment, and regal authority, the Son of Man declared that he should ‘come again ;’⁷ which expression may be taken in four different senses, according to the context ; viz. his ‘coming again’ to take vengeance on Jerusalem ; his ‘coming’ to establish his kingdom on earth ; his ‘coming’ to take his people to himself in death ; and his final ‘coming’ to judge the quick and dead. Of

¹ Mark x. 45.

² John iii. 14.

³ John vi. 48–53.

⁴ John i. 51.

⁵ John xii. 32–34.

⁶ John v. 27.

⁷ Mat. xxiv.

this, his most awful ‘coming,’ he gave minute and repeated predictions ; assuring his hearers, that he, who as Son of Man, was then mercifully employed in sowing the good seed, should hereafter send forth his angels to gather the wheat into his barn, and to bind the tares in bundles to burn them;¹ that he, who then appeared amongst them in so lowly a form, should at length shine forth as the lightning, from the East even unto the West ;² should come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, to sit upon the throne of judgment, to separate the righteous from the wicked, and appoint to each his eternal state.³

All these solemn and majestic powers are vested in the Son, *because* he is the Son of Man : therefore, far from losing any of his essential dignity as God, by becoming Man, he has thereby acquired new dignity, honour, and glory. And in his glorified state at the right hand of the Father, he still appears ‘the Son of Man.’ By this name John describes the glorious Being, whose eyes were as a flame of fire ; and his feet like unto fine brass ; and his voice as the sound of many waters.⁴ By this name again he distinguishes Him who sat upon a white cloud, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.⁵

What reply shall we now give to the question of our Lord, Whom say ye that I, the Son of Man, am ? Lord, in this name of Thine, which at first seemed so simple, we see a world of wonders ; a breadth and length, and depth and height, which pass our feeble powers to comprehend ; but which we hope to know more of hereafter. ‘ We believe and are sure, that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God ;’⁶ and we humbly trust, that flesh and blood

¹ Mat. xiii. 37-42.

² Mat. xxiv. 27.

³ Mat. xxv. 31.

⁴ Rev. i. 13-15.

⁵ Rev. xiv. 14.

⁶ John vi. 69.

hath not revealed this unto us, but Thy Father which is in heaven.¹

Were we to follow out all the practical reflections suggested by this name, it would involve much repetition of what has been already said, and anticipation of what is to come. We shall therefore merely remark, that as the name Son of Man may be taken in a three-fold sense, as applied to *Christ*, so it may be also, as applied to *man*. It expresses, 1st, the condition of man before the Fall; 2^d, What he has been by nature, ever since the Fall; and 3^d, What by grace he may again become. To be man, as Adam originally was, was to be the honoured friend of God, the heir of immortal bliss, a being full of innocence, holiness, and joy. To be man, as all the sons of Adam by nature are, is to be the enemy of God, an outcast from his presence, the child of misery, and the heir of everlasting death. In some forms, human nature is so degraded, so vile and revolting, that we feel ashamed of our species, and it seems a reproach to be called man. But in the person of the blessed Son of Man, whose glory we have been attempting to trace, Man becomes once more an honourable title. ‘He hath dignified our nature by taking it upon himself. Christ in our flesh, hath taken off the attainer of our rebellion. He hath, in our flesh, wrought out a glorious righteousness for us to appear in before God. Yea, he hath made us kings and priests unto God.’² And thus, again, Man is the emblem of all that is God-like. For though, in becoming new creatures, we must put off and crucify ‘the old man;’ we are yet exhorted to show our faithful adherence to Christ, by quitting ourselves ‘like men.’ And when St Paul would describe the perfection of Christian attainments, he calls it coming ‘unto a perfect

¹ Mat. xvi. 16, 17.

² Mason.

man,' putting on 'the new man,' which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

O then let us duly consider what is our natural state as sons of men ; with the sure and dreadful consequences of remaining in that state. Let us consider also the blessed and glorious state, to which, as sons of men, we are invited to rise. And, knowing that we can so rise, only through the Mediation of our blessed Days-man, let us fervently cry to God, with the Psalmist, 'Let thy hand be upon the Man of thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom thou madest strong for thyself.'

ESSAY XII.

MAN OF SORROWS.

NOT only did the Son of God become the Son of Man ; he became a **MAN OF SORROWS** ; distinguished above all other sons of men, by pre-eminence in woe, and familiar acquaintance with grief. In his original nature, as ‘God blessed for ever,’ he was inaccessible to sorrow. But when he undertook the vast work of Man’s Redemption, it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren in all things ; and, sorrow being, more or less, the portion of every man, since the Fall, it was necessary that the Divine Redeemer should take part of the same. He, therefore, assumed a body, liable to hunger and thirst, weariness and pain ; and a soul, susceptible of all the sinless affections of our nature, such as hope and fear, joy and sorrow, dread of suffering, amazement. He, therefore, took part in every sorrow that rends the heart of his people on earth, one alone excepted, that arising from personal guilt and indwelling sin. And this exemption was more than counterbalanced by the awful load of imputed guilt which was laid upon him.

The chapter in Isaiah whence we draw this title,¹ forms an affecting commentary upon it, giving the most connected view of the Sorrows of Jesus, together with the aim and effects of those Sorrows, to be found in the whole Bible. It begins by describing the poverty and

¹ Is. liii. 3.

obscurity in which he should grow up, and the consequent rejection he should meet with, which, as we have seen, was fulfilled in JESUS OF NAZARETH. But this was only the beginning of his sorrows.

‘ Grief was his close companion still,
‘ Through all his life below.’

His friends were to hide their faces from him, although he was to bear *their* griefs, and carry *their* sorrows ; and by his enemies he was to be stricken, wounded, bruised, oppressed, and afflicted; brought to the slaughter, taken from prison and from judgment, and, finally, cut off out of the land of the living. Nor were the sorrows of this innocent Sufferer to proceed from the hands of men alone ; it would please even the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief, until, at length, he should pour out his soul unto death.

Detached predictions of the Sorrows of Christ, equally minute and striking, are found in many parts of the prophetical writings. Some of the most remarkable of these will be noticed as we point out their fulfilment. Meantime, we shall only quote the pathetic lamentation, spoken primarily by Jerusalem in her desolation, but prophetically by the Messiah, in anticipation of his sufferings, ‘ Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.’¹ In obedience to this summons, we are now about to ‘ behold and see,’ to examine and consider, the sorrow of our blessed Master, and to inquire in what respects it exceeded the sorrow of any mere man. There is a saeredness in sorrow, especially in that of a man exalted by station or by worth, which makes us shrink from intruding too closely upon

¹ Lam. i. 12.

it, and feel it almost presumptuous to offer our sympathy. Yet, if the sorrow has been in any way caused by our fault, we must be hardened indeed if we feel not every pang he endures far more keenly than if it were inflicted upon ourselves. With mingled emotions, then, of reverential awe, of tender sympathy, and deep self-condemnation, let us approach and see *His* sorrows, who was God as well as Man ; and who was wounded for *our* transgressions, and bruised for *our* iniquities ; not presuming to dive into the mysterious depths of his sufferings, yet beholding the *Man* in humble admiration and mournful interest.

The Sorrows of Jesus may be traced to four general causes, viz. 1st, His poor and destitute outward condition ; 2d, His necessary association with sinners ; 3d, The assaults of Satan ; and 4th, The temporary loss of his Father's manifested love, with the sense of his dreadful wrath.

First, Of the outward privations and troubles of life, the Redeemer had a large share. The Evangelists, with characteristic simplicity, abstain from any detailed accounts of their Master's indigent estate, and from any comments upon it. But, from the circumstances incidentally mentioned, we gather, that his life was one of continual mortification, destitute of every thing that we consider essential to comfort. He had no settled place of abode, not even where to lay his head ; no regular supply of his daily necessities, nor convenient resting place after his toilsome journeys and harassing labours. We read in one place, that he ‘ hungered ; ’ in another, that he ‘ sat on the well, being wearied with his journey ; ’ allusion is made in another passage to his female followers ‘ ministering unto him of their substance ; ’ and we find, that He, to whom belong the silver and the gold, had not

wherewithal to pay tribute, till he procured it by miracle. In short, he described his own walk, in that which he required of his followers, ‘ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.’ Besides the actual hardships of his mode of life, Jesus must also have suffered deeply from the unceasing calls to public duty, which left him scarce any leisure for those private occupations in which he delighted. To a mind so ardently alive to the pleasures of holy meditation, secret devotion, and confidential intercourse with chosen friends, how severe must have been the trial of being summoned back to minister to the wants of the multitude, when he would have chosen to be alone with his heavenly Father, or with his disciples! He was at times forced to sacrifice his nightly repose, in order to hold uninterrupted communion with God. This want of command over his own time is a trial in which Christians can well sympathize with their Lord, and in which they need much to copy His example, who ‘ pleased not himself.’

Secondly, We have to consider a branch of suffering much more severe than those which sprung from poverty, labour, or hardship ; viz. the necessary *association with sinners* to which the Lord Jesus was exposed. What is it that imparts to the common troubles of life their chief power to wound the man of piety, but the recollection that they are all the effects of sin ; that he is surrounded by an atmosphere of ungodliness and iniquity ; that he must every day see God dishonoured, forgotten, disobeyed ; souls rushing headlong into perdition, in spite of the all-sufficient Remedy offered to them. He may have much to bear with in his own person, from the malice of enemies, and the errors of friends; but all this seems light to him, compared with the grief he feels for

the insults offered to God, and for the destruction impending on immortal souls. This grief will, of course, be in proportion to a man's progress in sanctification, to the intensity of his hatred to sin, and love to God and His law. The soul of righteous Lot was vexed from day to day with the filthy conversation and unlawful deeds of the wicked among whom he dwelt.¹ Rivers of waters ran down the eyes of David, because men kept not God's law.² Jeremiah wished that his head were waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears, that he might weep day and night for the sins and miseries of his people.³

But what was the holiness of Lot, of David, or of Jeremiah, compared with that of the Holy One of Israel? Seeing, then, that the zeal of Jesus for God, and his sympathy for man, infinitely exceeded those of the best mere human beings, we confess our utter inability to conceive what must have been the anguish of his soul during his abode in this wicked and miserable world. Occasional intimations are given by the Evangelists, of the intensity of their Master's grief at the dishonour he saw done to God, and at the misery he witnessed or anticipated for man. They tell us, that the zeal of his Father's house did eat him up;⁴ that he wept at the grave of Lazarus,⁵ and over the devoted city;⁶ that he looked upon the people with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.⁷

While, however, zeal for God and compassion for man cause the believer more grief than do any personal injuries; he is yet peculiarly sensitive to kindness or unkindness, to gratitude or the reverse. A great deal depends, no doubt, on constitutional temperament. What

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8.

² Ps. exix. 136.

³ Jer. ix. 1, 2.

⁴ John ii. 17.

⁵ John xi. 35.

⁶ Luke xix. 41.

⁷ Mark. iii. 5.

gives but momentary uneasiness to one mind, inflicts a deep and lasting wound in another ; an unkind word or look will give more pain to one of naturally keen sensibilities, than the bitterest reproach will to one whose natural feelings are blunter ; the slightest altercation will be more grievous to the former, than an open quarrel to the latter ; and the more generous the sentiments and benevolent the intentions of a man, the more bitterly does he feel the ingratitude of those whose welfare he has sought. But, making allowance for this difference in mental constitution, apart from religion, there is yet, we think, such a connexion between holiness and tenderness, or sensibility, as warrants us to conclude that He who was the holiest of all beings was also the most sensitive of beings. When, therefore, we consider that it was the Prince of Peace, who was engaged in continual strife with cunning and malicious foes ; that it was He who came to offer to sinners pardon and salvation, that was so persecuted, laughed to scorn, hated without a cause, rewarded evil for good, and counted an enemy, a blasphemer, an ally of the prince of the devils ; when we consider this, surely we must see the truth of his appeal, and own that in this respect, among many others, *there never was sorrow like unto his sorrow.* The keenness with which the blessed Saviour felt all these injuries, may be inferred, from many complaints in the Psalms, descriptive of his feelings. He says, ‘ I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours,—for I have heard the slander of many ; fear was on every side ; while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.’¹ ‘ My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore, and my kinsmen stand afar off. They also that seek after my life lay snares for me ;

¹ Ps. xxxi. 11–13.

and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deeeits all the day long.¹ ‘ Beeause for thy sake I have borne reproach : shame hath eovered my face. I am beeome a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children.—Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness ; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none ; and for eomforters, but I found none.’² We need but open the Gospel history, to see how exactly these predictions were verified, in the experience of the Man of Sorrows. Even his diseiples were a constant source of trial to him, by their slow understanding, their weak and wavering faith, their earnal ideas respecting his kingdom, their unwillingness either to suffer themselves, or see him suffer, in that great cause, for which he left the bosom of the Father. He had not one friend capable of encouraging, supporting, or counselling him. ‘ Be it far from thee Lord,’ was the misguided counsel of Peter ;³ and his relations would have interrupted by foree, what they deemed mad enthusiasm in his labours of love.⁴

But, *thirdly*, we have to consider the sorrow inflicted on Jesus, by his fiercest and most subtle foe, *the Devil*. It is a diffiiculty to many, how the Lord Jesus could be tempted, while the perfect holiness of his nature made it impossible that he should yield to temptation. But, without presuming to dive into this mysterious subjeet, we may yet see in part how it could be, that our High Priest was ‘ in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.’⁵ We know that it is one thing to feel tempted to sin, and another to yield to the temptation : we know also that the holiest believers are the most sensible of the assaults of Satan ; beeause just in propor-

¹ Ps. xxxviii. 11, 12. ² Ps. lxix. 7, 8, 20. ³ Mat. xvi. 22.

⁴ Mark iii. 21.

⁵ Heb. iv. 15.

tion as a man hates evil, will be his anguish and horror at the thought of committing it ; just in proportion as he resists, he will feel the force against which he resists. How then can we estimate the sorrow which must have broken the heart of the holy Jesus, when attacked by the horrible suggestions of Satan ? At the beginning of his ministry he was led up of the Spirit to this sore trial ; and when his bodily frame was exhausted by severe fasting, his soul was exposed to the dreadful assaults of the Tempter ; urged to distrust the care, and tempt the providence, of his heavenly Father, and to fall down and worship the Enemy of God and man.¹ This is the only instance particularly recorded, in which Jesus endured the assaults of the Evil One ; but we may conclude that he suffered from them frequently, by the expression, ‘the devil departed from him for a season ;’ by his addressing the apostles as those who had continued with him ‘during his temptations,’ and, by his saying, at the approach of the last great conflict, ‘This is your hour and the power of darkness.’ ‘The Prince of this world cometh.’ In all conflicts with this foe, the blessed Redeemer came off victorious ; he, truly, broke the head of the Serpent ; but, as truly, was his own heel bruised by the grief and anguish he endured ; and here, may we confidently affirm, that *no sorrow could, or ever can be, like unto his sorrow.*

But all these sorrows combined, all that arose from the troubles of life, from association with sinners, and from the assaults of Satan, were as nothing, compared with those we are *Lastly* to consider ; viz. Those which were laid upon the Man of Sorrows *by God himself*. The first dread scene of these sorrows was Gethsemane, the last was Calvary. In the garden there was no hand of man upon him. His bodily sufferings had not yet begun :

¹ Mat. iv. 1-11.

nor was he at other times daunted by the prospect of them. He had often minutely foretold to his disciples ‘what things should happen unto him.’ And, immediately after his agony, when Judas and the multitude came to take him, he went boldly forward, saying, ‘Whom seek ye?’ ‘I am he.’ What was it then that so overwhelmed him, during the short, but awful period that he spent apart from his disciples; that, according to one Evangelist, he said, ‘My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;’¹ in the words of another, ‘He began to be sore amazed, and very heavy;’² a third describes him ‘in an agony;’³ and St John records his saying, ‘Now is my soul troubled?’⁴ What was it, that forced from his body the strange and unnatural sweat of great drops of blood falling down to the ground? What cup was it that he three so agonisingly prayed might pass from him? ‘It was a cup of wrath, a large and deep cup, that contained more wrath than ever was drunk by any creature, even the wrath of an infinite God. A mixed cup; mixed with God’s wrath and man’s, in the extremity. And all the bitter aggravating circumstances that ever could be imagined; great consternation and amazement; this was the portion of his cup.’⁵

There is a seeming difficulty in reconciling the prayer of Christ, that, if it were possible, that cup might pass from him, with his acknowledgment that for that end he came into the world, with his faithfulness to the covenant eternally made with the Father for the redemption of man, with his having all along foreseen that hour, and declared that he was straitened till his bloody baptism were accomplished. But this difficulty vanishes, when we remember that ‘Christ had two distinct natures, and

¹ Mat. xxvi. 38.

² Mark xiv. 33.

³ Luke xxii. 44.

⁴ John xii. 27.

⁵ Flavel.

‘ that he acted sometimes as God, and sometimes as Man.
 ‘ Here he acted according to his human nature ; simply
 ‘ expressing and manifesting, in this request, the relue-
 ‘ tancy it had at such sufferings ; wherein he showed him-
 ‘ self a true Man, in shunning that which is destructive
 ‘ to his nature. As Man, he feared and shunned death ;
 ‘ but as God-Man, he willingly submitted to it.’¹ His
 petition that the cup might pass from him, while in per-
 fect harmony with his willingness to drink it, proved
 that ‘ it was a part of his satisfaction for our sins, to
 ‘ suffer inwardly such fears, tremblings, and consterna-
 ‘ tions : it was a clear evidence that he was in all things
 ‘ made like unto his brethren, except sin ; and it serves
 ‘ notably to express the grievousness and extremity of
 ‘ Christ’s sufferings, whose very prospect and appearance
 ‘ at some distance was so dreadful to him.’²

But, whereas the mental agony we have been contemplating, was unaccompanied with outward affliction, we must now turn to a scene still more tremendous, where mental agony, unspeakably and inconceivably dreadful, was added to every possible outward evil. Yes, it was when all his friends forsook him and fled; when many bulls compassed him, and strong bulls of Bashan beset him round ; when they gaped upon him with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion ; when the assembly of the wicked enclosed him, and pierced his hands and his feet ; when, in cruel insult, they were looking and staring upon him, deriding his claim to be the Son of God, reviling him, and wagging their heads, and unconsciously adopting the language of prophecy, ‘ He trusted in God ; let him deliver him, if he will have him ;’³ it was then, when the prince of darkness was concentrating his forces for the last despe-

¹ Flavel.

² Flavel.

³ Ps. xxii. 1-20.

rate onset, that the Father, instead of comforting and refreshing the Man of Sorrows, under his grievous burden, as he comforts his poor sinful children, when suffering for his sake, was pleased to aggravate his woes to the uttermost, by removing from him all sweet manifestations of his favour and love, and laying upon him the most dreadful impressions of his wrath. What was the intensity of those woes, no creature can conceive. But we may form some faint idea of them, by considering their effect upon Jesus, and the benefits flowing from them to his redeemed people. All his former troubles had not power to force from him a single complaint. As long as he could say, ‘And yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me,’ all sufferings were comparatively light; but now he pours forth the doleful cry, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’¹ As to sensible manifestation, God was, at this awful crisis, far from helping him, and from the words of his roaring. ‘His ‘Father forsook him, at that time when all earthly comforts had forsaken him, and all outward evils had broken in together upon him. When men, yea, the best of men, stood afar off, and none but barbarous enemies were about him; when pains, and shame, and all miseries, even weighed him down; then, even then, to complete and fill up his sufferings, God stands afar off too.’²

Although it does not belong to our present subject to state the benefits flowing to his redeemed from this desertion of Christ, we must so far look at those benefits, as to form some estimate of the sorrow he endured at that awful juncture. We know that the full demand of Divine Justice was exacted of him, as our Surety. Now, he could not have paid this demand, had not the sufferings of his soul at that period been equal to all that the

¹ Mat. xxvii. 46.

² Flavel.

souls of his redeemed should have suffered to all eternity. In this branch of sorrows, most emphatically, the Redeemer appeals to all, to see *if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted him, in the day of his fierce anger.*

The aim and fruits of the sorrows of our blessed Lord remain to be studied elsewhere. But, in the meantime, we would say to every one who may read these remarks, ‘*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?*’ Have you no concern in the sorrows here attempted to be portrayed? You have indeed a deep concern; this *must be something to you.* It must either be the most interesting of all subjects to you here, or the most dreadful throughout eternity. You may now neglect, despise, or overlook the sorrows of Christ, and give a cold assent to the history of them; but be sure they will force themselves on your attention hereafter; and you will unavailingly lament having ‘*passed by*’ with indifference from such a scene. But whence is it, that even believers have such slight and inadequate apprehensions of the sorrows of their beloved Lord? Is it from a vague notion, that his Manhood was shielded from the full weight of his sorrow, by its connexion with his Godhead? We have seen that this could not have been the case, otherwise his sufferings had not answered the end of Atonement and Satisfaction. We have seen that this was not the case, otherwise why did he pour out strong crying and tears? why did he fear and tremble? why was he troubled? It is true, ‘all his groans are past.’ He needs not now our sympathy, being exalted, to suffer and die no more. Still it is as truly *our* part to look upon Him whom *we* have pierced, and mourn, as it was the part of his actual murderers; and it lamentably proves our hardness of heart, that we find such difficulty in so doing.

Let us inquire, with an old author,¹ ‘ What influence may *Christ's sorrows* have both upon the *believer's joys and sorrows*? Did Christ bear his griefs, and carry his sorrows, and shall he not look upon him whom he has pierc'd, and mourn? Shall our hearts be unaffected, when we see the heart of Christ melted as wax in the midst of his bowels, and his soul poured out to death? May the Spirit of grace be poured out upon us, and then, but not till then, shall we thus look and mourn. We may also raise a noble joy out of the sorrows of the suffering Jesus; and this is not inconsistent with godly sorrow: whilst we mourn for our sins, as the cause of Christ's sorrows, we may rejoice in that consolation, which is the fruit of them. “We joy in God, through Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement.” Christ's soul was so exceeding sorrowful, even to death, that the souls of believers may be exceeding joyful, to eternal life.’

But the subject before us suggests many other painful reflections, besides that of the hardness of our hearts. How unlike are we to Christ in every point! *We* seek our own ease and comfort, generally above every thing: *He* pleased not himself. *We* are impatient under misrepresentation, or false accusation: *He* meekly bore the contradiction of sinners against himself. *He* took up his cross daily: *We* shrink from our light crosses, and, though perhaps willing to follow him to heaven, do not wish to travel thither by the same path which he trod, even ‘through much tribulation.’ Then, are we affected by different sorts of trials, anywise in the same proportion as Christ was? Does dishonour done to God grieve us more than injury done to ourselves? Is the hiding of God's face more intolerable to us than all other sorrows

¹ Hurrian.

besides ? Or ean we rest easy enough under that, as long as outward things go on smoothly ? Alas ! in all these respects, our own hearts condemn us ; and we must be condemned by the just judgment of God, were it not that the Man of Sorrows bare our sins in his own body on the tree, and ever liveth to make intercession for us.

‘ As all the great and glorious lines of divine trnht centre in a erueified Christ, and all the parts of gospel doctrine unite in him ; so all our graces and comforts are concerned in the knowledge of Christ, and him erueified. By exercise upon this object, faith lives and grows strong ; love feels the attractive power, and breaks out into a flame ; repentance flows, with all its springs, from a heart melted in the views of a dying Saviour ; mortification advances under the power of the Cross ; hope, with longing eyes and earnest desire, springing up with Christ from the dead, pleaseth herself with the prospect of seeing the Lamb, as it had been slain, and being for ever with the Lord ; and holy joy breaks forth in that song, “ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”’¹

¹ Hurrian.

ESSAY XIII.

A CURSE.

OF all appellations given to the Divine Redeemer, the most astonishing is now before us. Is it possible that He, the eternal fountain of every blessing, He who is ‘*over all, God blessed for ever*,’ did ever become, in any sense, and in any manner, a CURSE? We shrink from the term, as if it were blasphemy; yet if we shrink from accepting it, in its fullest sense, and most literal meaning, we shrink from the only foundation of hope to the whole human race.

But what is the exact meaning of this formidable term, which clothes it in our minds with such indescribable terror? ‘It is the just and awful sentence of God’s law, condemning one to suffer the full punishment of his sin. By this *Curse*, a man is separated from God’s favour and fellowship, is subjected to his avenging justice, separated to all evil, and set up as a mark of his indignation.’¹

The curses of *men* generally proceed from malice, passion, and revenge; and, unless sanctioned by God, can produce no bad effects. ‘The curse causeless,’ can injure no one; and, if incurred by zeal in God’s service, will by him be turned into a blessing. But the *Curse of God* is

¹ Brown’s Dictionary.

his righteous sentence against sin, and is always followed by the most tremendous effects.

In this awful sense, the Lord Jesus was ‘made a Curse.’¹ ‘He had the condemnatory sentence of the ‘broken law passed and executed on him, in the room ‘of millions of transgressors, by means of which he was ‘made an unparalleled instance of misery and woe.’²

In viewing the Lord Jesus as ‘a Man of Sorrows,’ we have in fact viewed him as under the curse; for only by the curse comes sorrow. It was because he was ‘made a Curse for us,’ that he ate bread in the sweat of his face, and in sorrow;³ that he was, for a season, driven out from the presence of God, his Father; and that, finally, he was brought into the dust of death,⁴ and suffered death in a manner pronounced cursed by the ceremonial law; for ‘it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.’⁵

The subject of this Essay, then, has been, in a great measure, anticipated in the one preceding. It is, however, too solemn and important to be passed over without separate consideration.

That we may be enabled to form some faint conception of the Curse, as inflicted on the Redeemer, let us consider the effects of God’s curse upon the creatures, as far as these are made known to us by Scripture and by experience. We see the effect of that withering sentence, ‘Cursed is the ground for thy sake,’⁶ in the noxious weeds that spontaneously grow out of the soil, and the great difficulty and labour with which it is made to produce the food of man; we see it in the misery, penury, and want, that weigh down a large portion of mankind. We read, with awful dread, the effect of God’s

¹ Gal. iii. 13; ² Brown’s Dictionary.

³ Gen. iii. 17-19.

⁴ Ps. xxii. 15. ⁵ Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13. ⁶ Gen. iii. 17.

curse upon Cain, when he exclaimed, ‘ My punishment is greater than I can bear;’¹ when he was driven out of the presence of the Lord, and became a fugitive and a vagabond; only preserved from immediate death, to be a beacon of the dreadful vengeance of Jehovah. How fearful was the curse of God, as denounced against the Canaanites, devoting them to utter destruction, without regard to age or sex. Even the chosen people of God were exposed, when disobedient, to his awful curse. On entering the promised land, they were solemnly offered life and death, a blessing and a curse.² The Lord promised to bestow on them all imaginable blessings, as long as they continued faithful to his covenant; and threatened to bring on them the most terrible curses, if they should break that covenant. To render this choice the more impressive, the Israelites were commanded, as soon as they had passed over Jordan, to proclaim the blessings from the top of one mountain, and the curses from the top of another; to put the blessing upon Mount Gerizim, the curse upon Mount Ebal. The first sin denounced as cursed on this occasion, was idolatry; then followed sundry crimes of a moral nature; and the whole catalogue of offences was awfully comprehended in the concluding sentence, ‘ *Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.*’ To each of these curses the people were required to add their solemn Amen; thus acknowledging the justice of God in punishing sin to the uttermost.³ Nor were they left in doubt as to the value of God’s blessing, and the fearfulness of his curse. Each of these was explained as extending to every thing that concerned them in temporal and spiritual things; to their worldly substance, and their religious privileges; to their bodily health, and that

¹ Gen. iv. 13. ² Deut. xi. 26–29. ³ Deut. xxvii. throughout.

of their offspring ; to the fruit of their land, and the increase of their flocks ; to their going out, and coming in, and to the state of their posterity for ages to come.¹ The Israelites, alas ! chose the evil, and refused the good ; they forsook the Lord their God, and thus brought upon themselves all the terrible curses with which he had threatened them. Their own prophets, in after times, bare witness against them, and read, in the desolation of Judah and Jerusalem, the fulfilment of the oath written in the law of Moses, the curse of Jehovah poured out upon them.² Daniel testifies that ‘ under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.’³ This might be said still more emphatically of Jerusalem, when, for rejecting her Messiah, she was doomed to still more tremendous destruction ; and when the awful imprecation of her sons, ‘ His blood be on us, and on our children,’ was answered by the weight of Almighty vengeance falling on their heads, rendering them truly ‘ an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach.’⁴ The multiplied and long-continued miseries, of every sort, which have followed the Jewish nation, from that time to the present, have been a standing emblem of the dreadful weight of God’s curse,—a standing proof that ‘ it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.’

The above instances are the most prominent recorded in Scripture, of the effects of God’s curse upon the earth, and its inhabitants ; and truly tremendous they are. Yet all of them combined, if we could form such a conception, would give us but a faint idea of what the blessed Jesus endured, when ‘ made a Curse for us.’ For, dreadful as are the inflictions of Divine vengeance

¹ Deut. xxviii. throughout.

² Is. xlivi. 28 ; Jer. xxiv. 9.

³ Dan. ix. 11, 12.

⁴ Jer. xlvi. 13.

in this world, there is always mingled in them some portion of mercy, inasmuch as, while we are out of hell, we are under a dispensation of mercy, and are punished less than our iniquities deserve ; whereas, in the curse inflicted upon the Redeemer, there was no mercy whatever to temper the vengeance of God. Had he not endured unmixed wrath for us, we could never have enjoyed unmixed mercy through him. As our sins deserved eternal vengeance, Christ must have suffered something equivalent to that, or he could not have ‘ redeemed us from the curse of the law.’ He, having wherewithal to pay the whole debt, which would justly have bound us for ever in hell, his temporary sufferings were equivalent to the everlasting woe of all his people. The damned in hell, then, whether human souls or Satanic spirits, can alone judge experimentally, or even imagine, the intensity of Christ’s agony, while under the curse. Indeed, an old writer¹ is so bold as to assert that even these know it not :—‘ None of the damned’ (says he), ‘ had ever so large a capacity, to take in the full sense ‘ of the wrath of God, as Christ had. The larger any ‘ one’s capacity is, to understand and weigh his troubles ‘ fully, the more grievous and heavy is his burden. Now, ‘ Christ had a capacity, beyond all mere creatures, to ‘ take in the wrath of his Father. And what deep ‘ and large apprehensions he had of it, may be judged ‘ by the bloody sweat in the garden, which was the effect ‘ of his mere apprehensions of the wrath of God.’ The same writer remarks, on the cry of the Redeemer on the Cross, “ *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* ” ‘ This was a *new* thing to Christ, and that which he ‘ was never acquainted with before. From all eternity, ‘ until now, there had been constant and wonderful out-

¹ Flavel.

‘ lets of love, delight, and joy, from the bosom of the Father into his bosom. He never missed his Father before ; never saw a frown, or a veil, upon that blessed face before. As it was a *new* thing to Christ, so it was a *great* thing to Christ, so great that he scarce knew how to support it. Had it not been a great thing indeed, so great a spirit as Christ’s was, would never have so drooped under it.’—‘ And thus would God have withdrawn himself from every soul that sinned, had not Christ borne that punishment for us in his own soul. If he had not cried, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ” we must have howled out this hideous complaint, in the lowest hell for ever, ‘ O righteous God, O dreadful, O terrible God, thou hast for ever forsaken me ! ’ Thus the words which, uttered by Rebekah, were vain and impious, might be most truly addressed by the Redeemer, to every one of his chosen children, ‘ *Upon me be thy curse, my son.*’

As the Curse borne by the Divine Redeemer exceeded in bitterness that inflicted upon any creature, so it exhibits, in the most awful light, God’s abhorrence to sin, and his severity in punishing it. Neither the miseries men endure in this life because of sin, nor the eternal misery which awaits the impenitent ; no, nor even the abandonment of Satan and his innumerable followers to hopeless, unredeemed woe ; none of these prove so awfully the certainty of God’s vengeance against sin, as did the sufferings of Christ, during those sad and dark hours. We may well inquire, ‘ If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ? ’ If God poured out his wrath and curse in such unmitigated severity upon the Son of his love, who had been his delight ere the worlds were made, who received such repeated testimonies of his acceptance as Mediator, who perfectly per-

formed his will, magnified his law, finished his work, and glorified him on earth ; what can they expect, who are the actual perpetrators of those sins, which he only bare by imputation ? What but everlasting endurance of the curse of a broken law, in that place prepared for the devil and his angels ?

How earnestly, then, should we examine whether we be still in danger of this curse, or if it be removed from us by Christ ! But to many, this examination may seem needless. They confess that God has some reason to be displeased with them ; but they think his *curse* too strong a term to apply to that displeasure ; they have never done any thing, they think, to expose themselves to so dreadful a doom ; and, besides, have they not, in the daily gifts of Providence, tokens of God's *blessing*, instead of his *curse*? Why would we disturb their gratitude and peace, by such forbidding and alarming views of the Divine Being ? Brethren, we desire to give you no unnecessary pain or disquiet ; but we know there are many sins pronounced accursed in God's word, of which you think but lightly : we know also, by God's word, that there is such a thing as your *blessings* being *cursed*.¹ If you will take the trouble to study the Bible, you will find the curse denounced, in awful clearness, against offences which men account venial and slight. Idolatry, for instance, was the sin which, of all others, exposed the professed people of Jehovah to his hottest indignation. If a man or woman, a family or a tribe, turned away their heart from the Lord, to go and serve other gods, all the curses written in the Book were to lie upon them.² The most secret commission of this sin, confined to our own bosoms, subjects us to the curse ; for, ' Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and

¹ Mal. ii. 2.

² Deut. xxix. 18-20.

maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.¹ Many other offences against the honour and service of God, are also by his Word pronounced accursed; such as withholding from him the best of our substance, our talents, and affections, and offering to him only the vile refuse. ‘Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.’² The same jealous God declared his professed people cursed for the sin of robbing him of that portion of their worldly goods which he demanded: ‘Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.’ ‘Wherein have we robbed thee?’ said the rebellious nation, ‘In tithes and offerings.’³

So strictly does the Lord examine the services rendered by his people; and so rigorous is he in punishing every neglect of the honour due to him: whereas, men esteem offences against the Majesty of Heaven as easily pardoned, in comparison of those which disturb the comfort of society. But neither does the Lord overlook the duties we owe to our brethren, in his denunciation of the curse. For, not only is he declared cursed that ‘perverteth the judgment of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow’:⁴ the same sentence lies upon him that hideth his eyes from the wants of the poor.⁵ Nor is this the sentence of the Old Testament alone: it is confirmed by that of Christ in the New; for, in his awful anticipation of the judgment, he pronounces them cursed who are not accused of oppressing or persecuting their poor brethren, but merely of neglecting to minister to them.⁶ And the fig-tree was cursed, not for producing bad fruit, but for producing none.⁷

¹ Jer. xvii. 5. ² Mal. i. 14. ³ Mal. iii. 8-9. ⁴ Deut. xxvii. 19.

⁵ Prov. xxviii. 27.

⁶ Mat. xxv. 41. ⁷ Mark xi. 21.

Now, who will be so bold as to assert his innocence of all sins pronounced by God accursed? Or, if any be so bold, will they plead perfect obedience to the whole law? If not, let them remember, ‘ Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.’¹ ‘ Cursed is every one that continueth not *in all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them.’ And if they still persist in maintaining their exemption from the curse, on the ground of personal merit or innocence, that very plea condemns them, as under the law; for, ‘ *as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.*’² There is no possible way of escape from the curse, to any son or daughter of Adam, but by an interest in, and union to, Him who ‘ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a Curse for us.’³

Then, as to the gifts of Providence being proofs of your favour with God, you must be aware that He bestows these indiscriminately on his own people and on others. Oh! beware lest you be receiving all your good things in this life. Beware lest your earthly possessions and honours, your good name, your family comforts, nay, your religious privileges, become curses to you instead of blessings. They are so already, if you are allowing them to turn away your heart from the bountiful Giver, to make you happy without Christ, and to lead you to take up your portion here. If you are not laying to heart the Lord’s message, and giving glory to his name, he says to you, as awfully and as certainly, as he said to the Jewish priests, by the mouth of Malachi, ‘ I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.’⁴

But let us turn from this dismal picture, to the eon-

¹ James ii. 10. ² Gal. iii. 10. ³ Gal. iii. 13. ⁴ Mal. ii. 2.

trast presented by the state of the godly. While even the *blessings* of the worldly man are *cursed*, even the *curse*s of the believer are *blessed*. From the effects of the curse hereafter, he is entirely freed by an interest in Jesus ; and although, while he continues in this world of sin, he must experience, more or less, the effects of the curse, in labour, sorrow, spiritual darkness, and temporal death ; all these, by his union to Jesus, are turned into blessings. *Labour* is blessed to him, as a means of shutting out temptations, of alleviating affliction, and exercising and improving his faculties. *Sorrow* is blessed to him, being in the hand of the Spirit, a valuable Teacher and Purifier. *Death* is blessed to him, being deprived of his sting ; and though still the mark of punishment, is the believer's best earthly friend ; and even *spiritual darkness*, which, when extreme, is worse than death, even this is converted into a blessing, through union to him who was ‘made a Curse for us.’ We cannot refrain from quoting again the words of Flavel on this point :—‘ As *Satisfaction* was designed in this ‘desertion of Christ, so also was the *Sanctification of all the desertions of the saints* designed in it. For, he ‘having been forsaken before us, and *for us*, whenever God ‘forsakes us, that very forsaking of his is sanctified, and ‘turned into a mercy to believers. Hence are all the ‘precious fruits and effects of our desertions. Such are ‘the earnest excitations of the soul to prayer ;¹ the an-‘tidoting of the tempted soul against sin ; the reviving ‘of ancient experiences ;² enhancing the value of the Di-‘vine presence with the soul, and teaching it to hold ‘Christ faster than ever before.³ These and many more ‘are the gracious effects of sanctified desertion ; they do ‘all owe themselves to Christ, as to the Author of them,

¹ Ps. lxxvii. 2 ; lxxxviii. 1, 9. ² Ps. lxxvii. 5. ³ Cant. iii. 1-5.

‘ who, for our sakes, would pass through this dark and sad state, that we might find these blessings in it.’¹

Many of God’s children have to endure long and painful seasons of the hiding of his face, especially at the beginning of their course. Others, again, having been drawn to the Lord at first ‘ by the cords of love,’ continue to have comparatively slight impressions of his wrath. Such persons, seeing the blessed effects of deep impressions upon others, are almost tempted to wish for a full sense of God’s wrath, and to imagine they would willingly suffer any anguish God could inflict for a season, that they might know what they have escaped for eternity, might have their repentance deepened, and learn to estimate more duly their obligations to the Redeemer.

These believers, however, know not what they wish for. The wish is unattainable, and, if attained, would not be effectual to the ends proposed. It is unattainable, because God *dare not* (if we may use the expression) let us feel the full weight of his wrath here, lest we die. The bodies and souls of men are not capable of feeling the whole demerit of sin, till they are salted as with fire, to make them sacrifices to his everlasting vengeance. Believers never can know by experience the full weight of Divine wrath, and could they know it, this would not be available to their sanctification. A sense of wrath, unaccompanied by a hope of mercy, is the parent, not of true repentance, but of despair.

But would you, O Christian, obtain deeper repentance, and warmer attachment to Christ, you must obtain it, not by feeling the dreadful curse of God on your own guilty head, but by a believing application of that blessed truth, ‘ Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a Curse for us.’

¹ Flavel.

PART IV.

THE PRINCIPAL OFFICES, TO SUSTAIN WHICH
THE SON BECAME INCARNATE.

ESSAY XIV.

SURETY.

WE are now commencing a most important division of our work. In the part just concluded, we abstained, as much as possible, from any direct reference to the *ends* for which God the Son endured such unspeakable humiliation, contempt, sorrow, and punishment; that we might view more singly his own state and experience.

That restraint, however, is now removed; and we are called to inquire directly, and investigate earnestly, *Wherefore* did the Lord Jesus Christ thus suffer and die? How did it consist with Divine Justice and Goodness, that the only innocent and holy Man that ever lived should be made such an unparalleled instance of misery and woe, that, had he not also been *God*, he must have sunk under the intolerable load?

To answer this question aright, we must study many of those offices, to sustain which the Lord was contented to be betrayed into the hands of sinners, to bleed and die;

such as the Sacrifice for his people, their Saviour, their Redeemer. But the office which immediately suggests itself as a reply to the question, is that of SURETY. When Messiah was ‘cut off,’ it was ‘*not for himself*,’ but as Surety and Representative of his people. ‘Surely he hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows; he was wounded for *our* transgressions; he was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peapee was upon him; and with *his* stripes *we* are healed.’ Here is the solution of the mystery; the cause of his degradation and sufferings; of his bitter agony and bloody sweat; of his heart-rending lamentations; the Lord had *laid on him the iniquity of us all*;² he ‘bare *our* sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.’³

A Surety is one who engages to pay the debt of another, in ease the original debtor, either from unwillingness or inability, should fail to pay it himself. Thus, Paul became surety for Onesimus, not only engaging to repay to Philemon whatever wrong he might have sustained from his erring servant, but intreating him to bestow on that servant, now penitent, all the friendship and kindness he owed to the Apostle himself.⁴ One of the noblest acts of suretiship ever performed by a mere man, was that of Judah in behalf of Benjamin. When aged Israel refused to let his youngest son go into Egypt, Judah beeame surety for his safe return; or, failing that, engaged to bear the blame for ever. His sincerity was soon put to the test by the stratagem of Joseph; and he did not shrink from the engagement under which he had come. With magnanimous disinterestedness, he begged to be substituted for his brother in perpetual bondage,

¹ Dan. ix. 26.

² Is. liii: 4-6.

³ 1 Pet. ii. 24.

⁴ Philemon 17, 18.

saying, ‘Thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.’¹

All examples of human disinterestedness, however, dwindle to nothing when compared with that of our DIVINE SURETY, whether we consider the dignity of the Surety, the character of those for whom he became bound, the amount of their debt, or the certainty of his being called upon to pay it. The first of these points, viz. the *Dignity of the Surety*, we have endeavoured to deduce, in the early part of this work, from his titles of JEHOVAH, LORD, LORD OF HOSTS, the MIGHTY GOD, &c. *Those for whom he became bound* were the guilty, helpless, and depraved creatures of his hand, the transgressors of his law, full of enmity against his Person, and rebellion against his authority. *Their debt* was so immense, that none but himself could discharge, or even reckon it. It was twofold, consisting of perfect obedience and full satisfaction. Man owed to his Maker perfect, unsinning *obedience*; but having, by his fall, become both unable and unwilling to render this, he was bound to give *satisfaction* to the offended Justice of Heaven; and having nothing wherewithal to satisfy that demand, he must have remained an eternal prisoner in the depths of hell. In this desperate condition, the Son of God saw and pitied the human race. Knowing that none other could help them, he himself interposed between them and his Father, as Surety for their incalculable debt.

In cases of suretiship between man and man, there is risk of loss or suffering; and Solomon gives many prudent cautions against engaging in it. Nevertheless, it is

¹ Gen. xlvi. 8, 9; xliv. 18-34.

frequently done without injury to the surety, and does not necessarily involve him in trouble. But in the case of our Divine Surety, there was no peradventure or uncertainty. He knew perfectly the parties with whom he had to deal ; that, on one side, was utter insolvency ; on the other, inflexible Justice ; *that he would, therefore, infallibly be called upon* to perform his engagement. He knew, by Omniscience, all it would cost him, from the beginning ; he knew it in his Human nature in the garden of Gethsemane. Yet ‘ his pity ne’er withdrew ; ’ he submitted to be ‘ made Sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.’¹ Our debt of *obedience* he paid, by his perfectly holy life on earth ; he fulfilled all righteousness, magnified the law and made it honourable ;² and could appeal to the Father, that he had glorified him on the earth, and finished the work given him to do.³ God was thus, at length, glorified in that region of his empire, and in that nature, where, and in which, he had hitherto been so foully dishonoured. The other part of our debt, that of *satisfaction*, Jesus discharged with equal fidelity, to his own most grievous cost, as we have lately seen. He shrunk not from his undertaking, but steadily went through the whole dread penalty, until he could say, ‘ It is finished,’ words full of comfort to poor insolvent debtors in all succeeding ages. The satisfaction being made, the Father testified his full acceptance of it, by raising our Surety from the grave, and exalting him to the honoured office of *Surety for himself to us*, to convey and secure to us, through his intercession and fulness, all the blessings of God’s covenant for time and for eternity. In this sense, the term Surety is used by St Paul to the Hebrews, when he says, Jesus was made ‘ a Surety of a better Tes-

¹ 2 Cor. v. 21.

² Is xlvi. 21.

³ John xvii. 4.

tament,' or 'Mediator of a better covenant.'¹ That covenant will be considered more appropriately hereafter; at present we have only to remark, that it is in this latter sense, of Surety for God to man, that David prays, 'Be Surety for thy servant for good.'²

In the faithfulness with which Christ executed his office of Surety for us to God, we have the strongest pledge of his faithfulness as Surety for God to us. Since he has so fully performed that part of his Office which cost him so dear, can he neglect that part which remains to be done? Will he be less faithful in conveying to his people the gift of the Holy Ghost, and all other good things, than he was in bearing their sins in his own body on the tree? It cannot be.

But, while we doubt not the power and faithfulness of Christ, to perform all he engaged to do, for every one whose Surety he became, the painful question may yet arise, 'Am *I* one of those for whom he undertook? 'Did he bear *my* sins in his own body on the tree?' This question is indeed a difficult one; but the difficulties attending it are of our own making. They spring, not from God, but from the unbelief and self-righteousness of our own hearts, and the opposition of our ways and thoughts to his ways and thoughts. The very simplicity of the covenant between the Father and our Divine Surety, is to us a difficulty. All that God requires of us, in order to our participation in the benefits of that covenant, is a sense of our poverty, and a willing reception of his free discharge. But we cannot believe that all, all is paid; we would add something of our own to the all-sufficient work of our Surety; and, as he will not consent to divide the work with us, we remain doubting, fearing, and comfortless. But let us shake off these

¹ Heb. vii. 22.

² Ps. cxix. 122.

sinful doubts and fears, and look at the terms of the covenant. Who are they that God invites to come to the waters? They that have ‘*no money*.’ How are they to buy wine and milk? ‘*Without money, and without price.*¹’ The gospel is preached to ‘*the poor*.’ Its feast is spread for hungry beggars, who have ‘*nothing to pay*:’ and while woes are denounced on the rich and the full; on those who say, ‘I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;’ not a word is to be found, in the whole Bible, to discourage or alarm those who are conscious of their wretchedness, misery, and poverty. On the contrary, all possible encouragement is held out to them. The Surety himself invites them to come to him, with all their burdens, perplexities, and fears:² the Father beseeches them to be reconciled to him through the Son:³ the Spirit says to them, ‘Come.’⁴ If, then, we know and feel that we owe to God more than ‘ten thousand talents,’ and have ‘nothing to pay;’ and if we are willing to rely simply on the satisfaction made by Christ; although our sense of destitution be not so deep, nor our reliance on Christ so firm, as we know they ought to be; we have all the qualifications required, for coming to receive the free gift of salvation through him, and may hope we are of the number of those whose Surety he stood.

Yet it is, doubtless, very desirable to possess other evidences, if we would be assured that we have actually received the gift, and have obtained a share in the work of Christ. Of these, the principal one is a deep sense of obligation to Him who has obtained our release, constraining us to devote all we have to his service. For, although our most ardent gratitude and most entire devotedness cannot give us the smallest *claim* to an inte-

¹ Is. lv. i.

² Mat. xi. 28.

³ 2 Cor. v. 20.

⁴ Rev. xxii. 17.

rest in the Redeemer's work, they are necessary as *proofs* that we have an interest in that work. And if we love but little, it is to be feared we have little forgiven. Our doubts of our own state spring not only from unbelief, but also from inconsistent walking. Could we say more truly, The love of Christ constraineth me to live, not to myself, but to him, we should be able to say more confidently, He died for me.¹ If we were more conscious that the life we live in the flesh, we 'live by the faith of the Son of God,' we should, with more unhesitating confidence, be able to say, 'who loved me, and gave himself for me.'²

If, then, we possess these evidences, though in much weakness, and though we cannot say, with undoubting assurance, 'My Beloved is mine, and I am his ;' yet let us thank God for the great things he has done for us, and wait on him, in humble expectation that we shall 'see greater things than these ;' continually looking up to Jesus, for a supply of those gifts which he is exalted to bestow, and praying with the Psalmist, 'Be Surety for thy servant for good.'

And O how blessed is the confidence of the true and simple believer ! One higher than the highest has discharged his whole debt, and infinite Justice itself can demand no more. His obedience and suffering are imputed to the believer, as if performed by himself, because He bare the believer's sins, as if committed by Himself.

‘ What wondrous love and mysteries
 ‘ In this appointment shine !
 ‘ My breaches of the law are his,
 ‘ And his obedience mine.’

The old divines abound in rich and powerful delineations of the Suretiship of Christ. Thus Flavel, ‘ When

¹ 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

² Gal. ii. 20.

‘ God spared not his own Son, this was the design of it,
‘ and could you know the thoughts of his heart, they
‘ would appear to be such as these : I will now manifest
‘ the fierceness of my wrath to Christ, and the fulness of
‘ my love to believers. The pain shall be his, that the
‘ ease and rest may be theirs ; the stripes his, and the
‘ healing balm issuing from them theirs ; the reproach
‘ and shame his, and the honour and glory theirs ; the
‘ curse his, and the blessing theirs ; the death his, and
‘ the life theirs ; the vinegar and gall his, the sweet of it
‘ theirs. He shall groan, and they shall triumph ; he
‘ shall mourn, that they may rejoice ; his heart shall be
‘ heavy for a time, that theirs may be light and glad for
‘ ever ; he shall be forsaken, that they may never be for-
‘ saken ; out of the worst of miseries to him, shall spring
‘ the sweetest of mercies to them. O grace ! grace be-
‘ yond conception of the largest mind, the expression of
‘ the tongues of angels !’

Thus Augustine, ‘ The wicked sins, and the Just is
‘ punished ; the guilty transgresses, and the Innocent
‘ suffers ; the ungodly offends, and the HOLY ONE is
‘ condemned ; what the evil man deserved, the GOOD
‘ ONE suffered ; the servant commits the crime, the Lord
‘ blots it out ; man does the evil, God bears the punish-
‘ ment. O Son of God, how far has thy humility de-
‘ scended, to what a height has thy love risen !’

ESSAY XV.

SACRIFICE—SIN-OFFERING—PROPITIATION.

THERE is no character in which the Lord Jesus is more distinctly or frequently held forth, in the Scriptures of both Testaments, than that of a SACRIFICE. Next to the office of Surety, or rather as an important part of that office, occurs his character of PROPITIATION, to explain the mystery of his sufferings and death. Christ ‘appeared, to put away sin by the Sacrifice of himself.’¹ ‘He hath given himself for us, an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.’² ‘He is the Propitiation for our sins.’³

A Sacrifice is any thing offered to God, to be his entirely; in order to acknowledge his power and man’s dependance, or his holiness and man’s guilt; to thank him for mercies received, or to procure some new mercy; to conciliate his favour, or avert his wrath. In this latter sense, especially, Christ was a Sacrifice; a Sin-offering; and, that we may rightly understand this his office, we must look back to the types and shadows whereby it was foreshown from the earliest ages.

Animal sacrifices seem to have been instituted, as types of the promised Atonement, immediately after man fell. For the coats of skins, wherewith the Lord clothed Adam

¹ Heb. ix. 26.

² Eph. v. 2.

³ 1 John ii. 2.

and Eve,¹ may be supposed to have been the skins of animals slain for sacrifice ; none being then allowed for food. We know this rite was practised by Abel,² by Noah,³ by Abraham,⁴ and his posterity ;⁵ and that Job offered sacrifices for his children and friends.⁶ In the Patriarchal ages, there was no restriction as to the kind of animal to be offered, the particular spot on which it must be offered, the ceremonies accompanying the sacrifice, or the person by whom it was presented. Every clean animal might be offered ; every sacrifice offered in faith was graciously accepted, wherever it was slain ; and every prince, ruler, or head of a family, might officiate as priest. From traditional acquaintance with this divinely-appointed institution, Heathen nations have adopted it to propitiate their false gods ; and, natural conscience teaching them the inefficacy of animal victims to take away the sins of men, they have, by the instigation of Satan, invented the horrid rite of human sacrifice. When the Hebrew tabernacle was erected, and the Law given by Moses, the institution of sacrifice was formed into a regular system, constituting a principal part of the outward and public services of divine worship. Precise rules were laid down, with regard to the kind and number of victims to be slain, and the manner of offering them, according to the rank or situation of the offerer, and the nature of his offence. No sacrifice might thenceforward be offered, except at the Tabernacle ; and the office of presenting it was confined to the family of Aaron.

All the sacrifices, under the Levitical dispensation, were full of spiritual meaning ; shadowing to the eye of faith, the nature of the salvation to be wrought, the way to partake of it, and the character and privileges of the re-

¹ Gen. iii. 21.

² Gen. iv. 4.

³ Gen. viii. 20.

⁴ Gen. xxii. 13.

⁵ Gen. xxxi. 54.

⁶ Job. i. 5.

deemed. They were all full of Christ : but as they were not all *expiatory*, or strictly emblematical of the *Atonement*, we shall confine our view to those which were so ; namely, the **BURNT-OFFERINGS**, **PEACE-OFFERINGS**, **SIN-OFFERINGS**, and **TRESPASS-OFFERINGS**.

The grand truths, proclaimed generally by all these expiatory sacrifices were, that man is a sinner ; and, as such, obnoxious to the just indignation and extreme vengeance of the holy and righteous God ; that God might be propitiated, but that he would not forgive sin without atonement made to his Justice ; that Justice required the death of the sinner, but, being tempered with Mercy, would accept a Substitute in his stead. The offerer, by laying his hand on the head of the victim, and then slaying it and burning its flesh, confessed that temporal death, and eternal suffering after death, were his own just portion, which he could escape, only by transferring his guilt to another, even to a Victim appointed by God. But while the *desert of sin* was thus awfully declared, in the slaying of innocent animals for man's guilt, *the freedom from condemnation, to be obtained in the way of God's appointment*, was as fully declared. The words so often repeated, in giving the ceremonial Law, must have administered strong consolation to every penitent Israelite ; ‘ the priest shall make an atonement for him, for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.’¹

In all these sacrifices, there was a general prefiguration of the death and sufferings of Christ. The victim must be *clean* ; *without spot or blemish* ; it must be *destroyed* by death and fire ; *its blood must be shed* with peculiar solemnity ; denoting the preciousness of that blood which it represented ; part of it, in some cases, was applied to the altar of incense, and the rest sprinkled

¹ Lev. v. 10, &c.

upon and about the altar of burnt-offering, or poured out at the bottom of it ; to show that no prayers or services of man, can be acceptable to the holy Lord God, except through the mediation of Christ, and the reconciling virtue of his blood. In those sacrifices where the flesh was not consumed, the *fat* was invariably burnt on the altar ; to show that God's people must devote to him the *best* of all they have ; or, that all *gross and carnal affections* must be destroyed within them ; or, that their natural *insensibility* of heart (of which *fatness* is a Scripture emblem), must be removed.

While these sacrifices generally prefigure the Atoning Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, each particular kind, viewed separately, exhibits some peculiar traits of resemblance to that one great Sacrifice ; and we may trace in each, some sweet and consoling, as well as humbling, reference to the Cross of Christ.

THE BURNT-OFFERING,¹

Which was the most ancient of all, being the sacrifice offered by the Patriarchs, before the giving of the Law, continued, during the Mosaic dispensation, to represent, more aptly and frequently than any other, the great and only true Atonement. It was, in many cases, a *voluntary offering* ; denoting the perfect willingness of the Son of God to atone for the sins of his people : It was *wholly consumed*, representing the intensioness of his sufferings, in body and soul : it was the *most perfect* of its kind, a *male without blemish* ; feebly shadowing the infinite perfections of the Son of Man, the only perfect One in human form. It was called, ‘*the offering which ascended*,’ that

¹ Gen. xxii. 13 ; Exod. xviii. 12 ; xxix. 42 ; Lev. i.

is, in smoke from the altar ; an appellation most expressive of the ascension of Christ to complete the work of reconciliation. The *skin* being the perquisite of the priest, who slew the Burnt-offering, might represent the garment wherewith believers are clothed, viz. the righteousness of a crucified Saviour. The *frequent repetition* of this sacrifice¹ was strikingly emblematic of our salvation by Christ : for, though he needed not to offer himself often, but once ; still, the fire upon the altar being constantly fed by the Burnt-offerings, prefigured the continual efficacy of the death of Christ, to satiate the eternal Justice of Heaven. And the requirement of a Burnt-offering *every morning and evening*,²—besides the more solemn sacrifices which might belong to the day, as at the commencement of a week, a month, or a year, and besides the great annual feasts,—teaches, that no attendance on more solemn ordinances can supersede the *daily* application of Christ's Atonement to our consciences. Besides all the stated and obligatory Burnt-offerings, they might be brought at any time by individuals,³ in acknowledgement of a general sense of sin, in their daily walk and temper, though they had not committed any of those special offences, for which Sin-offerings and Trespass-offerings were required. How striking is the lesson here taught, of our continual need of the blood of Christ, to cleanse us from the guilt of those infirmities and inconsistencies, of which, through their constant commission and the searedness of our hearts, we are scarcely conscious ! How consoling the hint that we need not wait for any stated period of returning ordinances ; but whenever our conscience feels burdened, may plead and partake of the great Propitiation. The command to *wash the inwards and legs* of the Burnt-offering, might signify the

¹ Lev. vi. 9.

² Num. xxviii. 3-31.

³ Lev. i. 3.

inward purity, and outward holy walk, which become the worshippers of God, and which were absolutely perfect in Jesus Christ.

PEACE-OFFERING.¹

While the Burnt-offering represented most vividly the intense sufferings of Christ for our redemption, the Peace-offering represented chiefly the sweet communion, with God, and each other, which the redeemed enjoy, through the merit of those sufferings. It was evidently a sacrifice of expiation ; for the victim was slain, and the offerer laid his hand upon its head : but, whereas the flesh of the Burnt-offering was wholly consumed on the altar ; and that of the Sin-offering (except for the priest or the congregation) was divided between the altar and the priest ; the Peace-offering was divided between the altar, the priest, and the offerer ; forming a kind of feast, in which the Lord, his ministers, and people, met together in peace and joy ; an emblem of that blessed feast enjoyed by believers, in which they feed upon the body and blood of their slain, but exalted Saviour, with faith, repentance, and gratitude, toward God, and with love to one another.

SIN-OFFERING.²

Of Sin-offerings in general, no part was burnt except the fat ; the rest belonged to the priests. If, however, it was offered for the priest, or for the congregation, the fat being first laid upon the altar, the whole remainder of the victim, including its skin, was carried forth with-

¹ Lev. iii. ; vii. 11-21.

² Lev. iv.

out the camp, and there burnt,—a striking emblem of that accursed death which the blessed Redeemer underwent, without the gate of Jerusalem ; and of the abhorrence with which his people should cast out sin from their hearts and from their dwellings. Peculiar solemnities were observed in regard to the blood of those victims which were burnt without the camp. While most of it was to be poured out at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering, some part was applied more solemnly than in any other sacrifice. The priest dipped his finger in the blood, and sprinkled it seven times before the vail of the sanctuary, putting some also upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense. On the great Day of Atonement,¹ the blood was sprinkled, not before the vail, but within it, even on and before the Mercy-seat itself. But the priest not being allowed to enter within the vail but once a-year, the sprinkling of blood before, or toward the Mercy-seat, at other times, served the same typical purpose ; namely, to show that only by the blood of Jesus, sinners can enter into the holiest ; either to the Throne of Grace here, or to God's immediate presence hereafter. The laws respecting any thing or person touched by the Sin-offering, are difficult to understand ; for it seems contradictory, that whatsoever should touch the flesh therof should be holy ; and any accidental spot of its blood must be washed in the holy place ; yet, that the vessel, wherin it had been sodden, must be broken, if earthen, and carefully cleansed, if of metal ;² and that they who came in contact with the Sin-offering, on the Day of Atonement, must perform acts of purification ere they could again enter the camp.³ The only way to explain, how the same substance could impart holiness and pollution, seems, to refer the former to the perfect

¹ Lev. xvi.

² Lev. vi. 27, 28.

³ Lev. xvi. 26-28.

holiness of the thing signified, the body and blood of Christ, with the sanctifying effect of partaking of them; and the latter to the inefficacy of the types themselves to take away sin, and the odious pollution which cleaves to every thing touched by sinners, which could only be cleansed with ‘better sacrifices than these.’ The most awful thing connected with the Sin-offering was its being required chiefly for *sins of ignorance*. How does this tear away all our vain excuses on the plea of ignorance, when the means of instruction are within our reach, nay, in our hands! and declare, in terms not to be mistaken, that every sin, however committed, even in ignorance and unbelief, deserves God’s righteous vengeance, and can only be forgiven through the blood of Atonement. At the same time, the different laws for the sin-offering, for the priest, or for a ruler, for the congregation, or for an individual, show that there are different degrees of guilt, according to our various circumstances and advantages.

TRESPASS-OFFERING.¹

THE manner of presenting this offering seems to have resembled, pretty nearly, that of the one we have just considered, and the difference in their signification is not easily ascertained. The Trespass-offering, however, appears to have been required for offences of deeper dye than the Sin-offering; for sins of *inadvertence* and *surprise*, more than of ignorance; for offences knowingly committed, either against the ritual or moral law, or both. The Trespass-offering being enjoined for injuries done to man, testified, that disobedience to God is the great evil, even

¹ Lev. v. ; vi. 1-7.

of those crimes which disturb the peace of society ; and that repentance and restitution, although necessary, and commanded by Him, cannot expiate the crime, for which nothing can avail but the blood of Christ.

THE RED HEIFER.¹

BESIDES the expiatory sacrifices above mentioned, there was one which typified, in a remarkable manner, the union of *expiation* and *purification* in the death of Christ. This was the sacrifice of a heifer, whose ashes were to be used for purification from ceremonial defilement. It was evidently an *atoning* sacrifice ; for the innocent animal was slaughtered and entirely consumed, and every circumstance was so ordered as to show the extreme pollution which was imparted to it. Yet, were its ashes mingled with running water, the appointed means of *purification from sin*, which must not be omitted, on pain of exclusion and death. ‘The *typical* purifying of the ashes was derived from the *typical* expiation made by the spotless animal thus slaughtered.’² And what could testify more strongly than this sacrifice, the purifying efficacy of the blood of Christ, mingled with the living water of his Spirit, to purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God !³

In addition to all these, we may mention two occasional sacrifices ; the one, of two goats on the great Day of Atonement ; the other, of two birds, for the cleansing of a leper. The two goats, one of which was slain as a Sin-offering ; and the other, after being presented to the Lord, and having all the iniquities of Israel transferred to it, being let go as a scape-goat into the wilderness,

¹ Num. xix.

² Scott.

³ Heb. ix. 13, 14.

into a land not inhabited, represented, in a lively emblem, the death of Christ for our sins, and his rising again for our righteousness. A similar type was presented in the two birds,—one being slain in an earthen vessel, over running water ; and the other ‘ dipped in his fellow’s blood,’ and in the water, let go into the open fields. In the bird slain over running water, we see Jesus Christ, ‘ through the eternal Spirit, offering himself without spot to God ;’ in the living bird, we see him bursting the bands of the grave, and ascending to heaven, there to plead the merits of his sacrifice, and reap the reward of his sufferings : and, in both these sacrifices, especially in the latter, we see the sinner freed from condemnation by the atoning death of Christ, washed in his blood, sanctified by his Spirit, and brought into the glorious liberty purchased by his obedience and death.

We have but skimmed the surface of this interesting subject ; but those who will explore it for themselves, in the sacred records, will find their diligence amply rewarded, by rich and affecting views of every fundamental doctrine, and of every practical duty of the Gospel. We can testify from experience, that, by studying the typical offerings of the Mosaic law, along with the Gospel, we learn the preciousness of Christ more effectually than by any study of the Antitype simply. Our faith thereby gains strength and clearness ; we learn more experimentally to lay our hand upon the holy and guiltless head of the Lamb, and confess over him all our iniquities, and all our transgressions ; and, reminded by these various offerings, of our own various and ever-returning necessities, we learn to look unto Jesus more frequently, and with more direct application of his Atonement to our own conscience. In the sure acceptance, also, which followed the offering of the prescribed victim, we have

strong assurance of our own acceptancy, when pleading in faith the Atonement wrought by Christ. These offerings had indeed no real efficacy to atone for sin ; they were divinely appointed means, whereby temporal evils were averted, and temporal blessings continued, to Israel, as a nation ; but unless offered in faith of the One Great Atonement, utterly unavailing as pertaining to the conscience. Yet to us, who are privileged to view them through the clear light of the New Testament, they present lessons of the greatest importance. They teach the ‘ horrid filthiness of sin,’ in the eyes of a holy God, polluting every thing it touches ; its extreme hatefulness to God, even when committed through ignorance or inadvertency. They teach that there is One Way, and One alone, through which pardon may be sought and found ; that man may not invent a way, nor add any thing to God’s way, but must, if he would obtain that boon from his Maker, adhere closely to His command in seeking it. The minute laws given respecting those sacrifices, and the care taken to set forth, by such lively emblems, the One true Sacrifice to be offered in after times, show the immense importance God attaches, and which he would have us attach, to the Vicarious Sufferings of his Incarnate Son.

Notwithstanding our affection for the shadows, however, we turn, with refreshment and delight, from them to the Substance ; from the patterns of things in the heavens, to the heavenly things themselves. Here, in the obedience unto death of the Son of God, in the mortal agonies of his body, and the unknown anguish of his soul, we behold a full and perfect Atonement, sufficient for the accumulated guilt of a whole world. In this Sacrifice was offered a Satisfaction adequate to the demands of Heavenly Justice ; for, as the guilt to be expiated was

infinite, the Victim was also infinite. He was none other than ‘ God manifest in the flesh,’ the eternal and glorious Jehovah. The blood wherewith the Church was purchased, was the blood of God.¹ He alone, who possessed a self-existent life, could voluntarily resign that life ; and He alone could, by any obedience or sufferings, offer expiation for others. All creatures are bound, by irreversible obligations, to render to the Creator the whole of their services, in body and soul, in life and death. The holiest and most exalted of them can render to God nothing but what they have received from him, and what it is their bounden duty to render. But the co-equal Son of the Father, free, independent, and glorious, dying in our nature, and in our stead, offered a voluntary, perfect, and efficacious Atonement ; his Deity forming, as it were, the Altar which sanctified, and rendered available, the offering of his Humanity. So infinite was his holiness, that he could bear the whole weight of imputed guilt, without contracting the slightest pollution ; whereas we have seen, that a single offence, imputed to a creature victim, rendered it odious in the sight of God. His sufferings, indeed, were temporary, and the punishment deserved by sin is eternal ; but the unspeakable dignity of his Person rendered his sufferings, though comparatively short, of infinite efficacy ; and while by them the honour of Divine Justice was fully vindicated, all the ends of punishment were more effectually attained, than they could have been by the infliction of it upon the actual transgressors. By the awful vengeance poured on the head of his own Son, God ‘ condemned sin in the flesh ;’² testified his abhorrence to, and determination to punish it, in the most tremendous manner possible ; and took the most effectual way to overawe

¹ Acts xx. 28.

² Rom. viii. 3.

and to sanctify, as well as to encourage, the penitent sinner.

‘ Christ crucified is the union of all the parts of the Christian doctrine, suited to our miseries and wants, ‘ the support and life of all our graces. Take away this, ‘ and what becomes of Election, which is through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus ? How should Justice be satisfied, if Christ’s atoning Sacrifice were wanting? ‘ And if there be no satisfaction, there can be no remission, and consequently no salvation. Of what advantage would the covenant of grace, or the promises of it, be, if that blood were never shed, which confirms them, ‘ and upon the shedding of which they all depend? On what account could the Holy Spirit have been given, ‘ to fit men for heaven, if Christ, by his blood, had not removed the curse, and obtained eternal redemption for us ? What joy in God, what peace in ourselves, what rejoicing in Christ, what hope of glory, could we have had, if Christ had not “put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself?” In short, take away a crucified Christ, Election would be fruitless, Redemption a nullity, Justification and Adoption but a fancy, yea, the whole Gospel but a mere fable.’¹

In viewing Christ as a Propitiation, it is necessary to guard against an error, which those who deny this grand doctrine are constantly laying to our charge,—that of imagining God the Father an implacable and vindictive Being, who is only rendered merciful by the interposition and intercession of the Son. In refutation of this error, we need only adduce the Scripture declarations concerning the love of the Father in *sending his Son* to be the Propitiation for our sins;² and in *making him to be sin* for us.³ In the Sacrifice offered on Calvary, all the Sa-

¹ Hurrian.

² 1 John iv. 10.

³ 2 Cor. v. 21.

cred Persons harmoniously concurred. ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.’¹ And, ‘through the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself without spot to God.’² ‘The love of the Father is infinite, ‘so is that of the Son ; and in what is infinite, there are ‘no degrees : and therefore the love of the Father and of ‘the Son is to be admired, but not to be set the one ‘above the other. It was infinite love in the Father, ‘that caused him to *give his Son* ; and infinite love in ‘the Son, that inclined him to *give himself*: to find, and ‘to become a Ransom, proceeded from the same bound-‘less grace in the Father and the Son ; and therefore they ‘are both to be jointly and equally admired and praised.’³

Alas! with what shameful unconcern do most men treat this inestimable, this astonishing Saerifice ! When we do get a heart affecting sight of it, it seems as though we had never seen it before ; and so grand, so all-engrossing, does it appear, that we wonder how any other subjeet can, for many moments, employ our thoughts. Oh that these views were more abiding ! Oh that we could bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus ! Then would the life of Jesus be more manifest in our lives. Then would our inward and outward purification evidence our being sprinkled with his blood and with his Spirit ; and we should have a well groinded assurance that the smoke of his Saerifice was aseending on our behalf to Heaven.

And let us remember, that while the blood of Christ is needed to cleanse from the least sin, it is sufficient to cleanse from the greatest ; and that nothing can destroy our souls, but refusing to partake of the Remedy offered : For ‘the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.’

¹ 2 Cor. v. 19.

² Heb. ix. 14.

³ Hurrian.

ESSAY XVI.

THE LAMB.

THIS title might, with propriety, have been introduced as a branch of the Essay just concluded. But so many blessed associations are called forth by the name of THE LAMB, that we cannot withhold from it a separate consideration. In this emblem are expressed, most emphatically, both the meek, gentle, and spotless Nature of the Redeemer, and his being made a Saerifice for sin. His resemblance to the lamb, in patient, unresisting suffering, was portrayed by Isaiah in those affecting words, ‘ He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.’¹ And we know how literally this prediction was fulfilled, when the meek and lowly Saviour stood silent before the chief priests, and before Pilate; and when, though accused of many things, he held his peace, and answered nothing.

In general, however, the title seems used simply to denote the Atoning office of Christ, in reference to the use of lambs as typical sacrifices. Besides the frequent use of lambs in other kinds of offerings, they were invariably taken for the Morning and Evening burnt-offering.² Indeed, before the Mosaic law was given, or the Aaronic rites instituted, the death of Christ was prefigured, more solemnly and minutely than in any other

¹ Is. liii. 7.

² Ex. xxix. 38, 39.

sacrificee, by that of the Passover, in which the victim was a lamb or a kid. And, to go farther back still, a prophetical intimation was given, by the mouth of Abraham, of the one great Atonement which God would provide and accept, under the figure of a lamb.¹ In answer to the artless question of his son, ‘Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?’ the Patriarch replied, ‘My son, God will provide himself a *lamb* for a burnt-offering.’ In the virtual offering up of Isaac, was also signified that ‘richer blood’ than that of lambs and bullocks, even the blood of One in human nature, could alone take away sins.

The Passover, especially at its first celebration, was so replete with images of Christ and his salvation, that we return to examine it more nearly.² It was instituted on that memorable evening which preceded the deliverance of Israel out of the land of bondage; and its annual repetition, while appointed to commemorate that great event, served also to point out, in lively symbols, the far greater deliverance to be wrought for the true Israel from bondage to sin and Satan.

As the killing of a lamb was the prescribed prelude to Israel’s deliverance, and the sprinkling of its blood upon their houses the appointed means of their protection from the destroyer; so the death of the Lamb of God opened the only way of escape to every one of the human race; and none can be delivered from the wrath to come, unless sprinkled by faith (the spiritual hyssop) with his precious blood. To proclaim the immense importance of the things typified, the month in which the Passover was held, was thenceforward to be to Israel the beginning of the year. And by the time fixed for its observance, a standing prophecy was instituted of the month,

¹ Gen. xxii. 7, 8.

² Ex. xii. throughout.

the hour, and nearly the day of the month, on which the true Paschal Lamb was to be slain. As Christ was to be put to death by the united voice of the Jewish nation, and in the evening, the whole congregation were to kill the lamb in the evening. To denote the excruciating agonies of Jesus, the lamb was, unlike every other sacrifice, to be roasted with fire, the known emblem of God's wrath. Yet, to show the unspeakable value of the body of Christ, and the care with which his Father would preserve it, even while under his imputed wrath ; to show the sacred reverence with which we should regard it, and our obligation to receive him as a whole Saviour, in all his offices and relations, the command was given not to break a bone of the lamb, but to roast it whole ; and that none of its flesh should be carried out of the house, but what remained must be burnt.

No part of the Paschal Lamb was consumed on the altar : it was feasted on by the worshippers, shadowing forth the spiritual nourishment and refreshment derived to believers, by feeding on the body of the Lamb of God. And in each injunction, as to the mode of partaking of this feast, was contained some gospel lesson. The prohibition of leaven in their habitations during the whole season, taught the obligation laid on those who profess dependance on Christ, and communion with him, to cast out from their hearts all manner of hypocrisy and insincerity. The bitter herbs, emblematical of godly sorrow, mortification of sin, and willingness to suffer in God's service, were an intimation, that even the purest joys here below, are not unmixed with grief. The attitude in which the feast was to be eaten, 'in haste, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand,' implied, that our highest spiritual enjoyments are in this world transient ; and that even in those

ordinances in which we hold the nearest and sweetest communion with God, we must remember that we are but pilgrims, needing constant watchfulness and circumspection; that these refreshments are not given us to rest in, but as means of quickening us in our journey to a better country, for which we should prepare to depart on the shortest notice.

The injunction to the Israelites not to go out of their houses, their blood-sprinkled houses, till the morning, teaches us, that if we would be sheltered by the blood of Jesus, from the avenging wrath of Heaven, we must keep close under that shelter all the time we are in this world of darkness and of danger. In regard to the required token of blood outside the house, we might ask, Could not the Omnipotent One have distinguished his own chosen people from his enemies without any external sign? Doubtless, he could infallibly have done so; but he requires them openly to avow their dependence on him, and obligations to him; and unless they do so, they have no ground to expect exemption from the destruction that awaits his enemies.

Let us now, leaving the type, turn to Him whom it typified, and, with humble reverence and grateful adoration, ‘behold the Lamb of God;’¹ dwell with unwearyed satisfaction on his unspotted, unblemished purity; on the divine preciousness of his blood; and on his eternal ordination to the office, for he was ‘fore-ordained before the foundation of the world.’² Let us with joyful confidence reflect, that this is not an offering of our own choosing or providing, but ‘the Lamb of God,’ the Lamb which God himself provided for a burnt-offering, and which, therefore, he cannot fail to accept. ‘Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the

¹ John i. 29.

² 1 Pet. i. 18-20.

feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness ; but with the unleavened bread of sineerity and truth.¹ If our souls are, indeed, sprinkled with his protecting blood, they will also have learnt to feed upon him, both in habitual communion, and in that sacred feast which he instituted ‘the same night in which he was betrayed.’ For, having so punctually observed the Jewish rites to the last, and eaten the Passover that evening with his disciples, Jesus appointed the Christian festival of the Lord’s Supper to supersede it, and to continue for the strengthening and refreshing of the souls of his redeemed, till they shall sit down with him to the Marriage Supper, and need outward ordinances no more.

We cannot take leave of this delightful Name, the theme of prophets and apostles, without remarking what is said of it, in the pure realms above, by glorified saints and holy angels.

The Book of Revelation lifts up a corner of the veil which conceals from our view the heavenly world ; and by the study of it, we may discover, in some faint degree, the estimation in which the Lamb is there held. Many are the glorious titles given to the Son of God in that revealed book. He is styled ‘King of kings,’ and ‘Lord of lords ;’ ‘the Prince of the kings of the earth ;’ ‘Alpha and Omega ;’ ‘the Almighty,’ &c., but under no title does he receive such rapturous adorations, not only from the Church which he has redeemed, but from the Angelic Host, as under that of the Lamb ; ‘a Lamb as it had been slain ;’² ‘the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.’³ The meaning of this strong metaphor must be, that the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ, and his Mediatorial authority, grounded on his Sacrifice, is the work whieh, of all others, manifests most brightly

¹ 1 Cor. v. 7.

² Rev. v. 6.

³ Rev. xiii. 8.

the glory of the Godhead, and calls forth most loudly the praises of all holy beings.

The true Godhead of the Lamb is here distinctly proved, by his possessing and exercising Divine perfections ; his unity with the Father is as distinctly proved ; and the unity of Father, Son, and Spirit no less so, in these emblematical representations.

For he that sitteth upon the throne and the Lamb are one :¹ their throne is one :² the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Light of the heavenly city, and its Temple.³ And the pure River of Water of Life (the known emblem of the Holy Ghost), proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.⁴

At the same time, the delegated authority vested in the Lamb to preside over the affairs of the church, is clearly represented by his ‘ seven horns,’ the emblem of Almighty power to defend his people, and subdue his enemies ; and by his ‘ seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth,’ denoting, not only essential Omniscience, but authority to communicate the varied influences of the Spirit to every part of the church on earth. The act of taking the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, and opening the seals of it,⁵ denoted also the office of the Lamb to unfold to the church the will and purposes of the Father.

While the grand doctrines of the Trinity in Unity, and of the Mediatorial glory of the Son, are thus clearly proclaimed in this sacred book, it teaches also, in sublime strains, the way of salvation, and the character of the saved. It is a singular proof of the riches of the sacred mine in which we are digging, that, by tracing one vein of it,—one Title of the Redeemer,—through one book of

¹ Rev. vi. 16.

² Rev. xxii. 3.

³ Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

⁴ Rev. xxii. 1.

⁵ Rev. v. 5-7.

his word, we may collect all the great characteristics of the Gospel, all the marked outlines of Christian faith and practice. Thus, taking the name of the Lamb, and following it through the Revelation of John, let us inquire, What is the procuring cause of the admission of sinners into heaven ? It is that their names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life.¹ How did they obtain the white robes of innocence, and the palms of victory, with which they stand before the throne ? They had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.² The victory was *his, not theirs*, for it was by the blood of the Lamb that they had overcome.³ Therefore, to God they ascribe their whole salvation, crying, with a loud voice, ‘Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.’⁴ Not a syllable is heard of human merit in those exalted realms. On the contrary, the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne, as unworthy to look upon God ; and cast their crowns before him, saying, ‘Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power.’ For ‘ thou wast slain, and has redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.’⁵ Even the angels, who have no personal share in the work of the Lamb, choose for their favourite theme his dying love ; and, without the slightest mixture of envy, at the nearer relation now formed between man and God, triumph in the exaltation of the Lamb, in human nature, above principalities and powers ; and, encircling the Redeemer and his redeemed, they sing, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.’⁶

While, however, the means of salvation for sinners,

¹ Rev. xxi. 27.

² Rev. vii. 14.

³ Rev. xii. 11.

⁴ Rev. vii. 10.

⁵ Rev. v. 9.

⁶ Rev. v. 12.

and their admission into heaven are clearly shown to be of God, and not of themselves, it is equally manifest that they must acquire a peculiar character, to make them meet for the holy society and enjoyments above. All those who stood with the Lamb on Mount Sion, had ‘ his Father’s name written on their foreheads.’¹ The holy image of God had been re-traced upon them, and they had openly avowed their relation to him. Again, their obedience to the example of Christ was declared, by their having followed the Lamb whithersoever he went.² Their unfeigned sincerity, by the declaration, that ‘ in their mouth was found no guile.’³

The glory and bliss to which the followers of the Lamb will be admitted, are set forth in this book, by the most delightful images that can be conceived; all calculated to show, that near and immediate communion with their God and Saviour forms their great and unspeakable joy. ‘ They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.’ ‘ The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.’⁴ With unutterable condescension, the Divine Redeemer accounts the happiness of his people the completion of his own happiness; for their union to him in glory is ‘ the Marriage Supper,’⁵ the Church is ‘ the Lamb’s Wife.’⁶

But alas! this title brings to view scenes most opposite and painful. He who will receive so graciously, and honour so highly, the meanest of his followers, will show himself proportionably terrible to every one of his enemies. The wrath of the Lamb will be so unspeakably

¹ Rev. xiv. 1.

² Rev. xiv. 4.

³ Rev. xiv. 5.

⁴ Rev. vii. 15–17.

⁵ Rev. xix. 9.

⁶ Rev. xxi. 9.

dreadful, that the most stout-hearted of his foes will one day call, but call in vain, to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from *the wrath of the Lamb*.¹

Finally, we would ask, what kind of happiness do those expect in heaven, who feel but slightly their obligations to Christ, and have little or no pleasure in celebrating his praises here on earth? Even supposing, what is impossible, that such could find admission into the heavenly Jerusalem, what part could they take in its holy employments and delights? Would not the unceasing song of praise to ‘the Lamb that was slain,’² be to their ear an insipid and irksome repetition? Let us then learn to sing ‘the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb,’ ere we quit this mortal scene; and, diligently follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: so shall we have increasing evidence that our unworthy names are written in his Book of Life, and brightening hopes of being one day called to his Marriage Supper.

¹ Rev. vi. 16.

² Rev. xv. 3.

ESSAY XVII.

REDEEMER.

‘ To redeem, is to buy back persons or things formerly sold, by paying a due price for them; or, to deliver from distress and bondage, by the exertion of great power and love.’¹

To the Hebrews, the idea of Redemption was endeared and rendered familiar, in both the senses above given: in the former (that of a *ransom* paid), by personal and domestic experience; in the latter (that effected by *power*), by one of the most wonderful events in their national history.

They were made practically acquainted with the former and most literal sense of the term, by the enactment of a wise and benevolent law,² which required the nearest of kin to buy back the lost inheritance, or ransom the person, of his destitute brother, by paying a sum, proportioned to the distance or nearness of the next jubilee, or season of general restoration and release.

The primary intention of this law was, doubtless, to prevent oppression, to preserve distinct the genealogy of the different tribes, and prevent the disproportionate wealth of any. But an important end was also answered by it in a spiritual point of view: for by this transaction

¹ Brown’s Dictionary.

² Lev. xxv. ; Ruth ii. 20.

was typified, even more significantly than by the substitution of unconscious animals in the sinner's stead, the vicarious work of the DIVINE REDEEMER. A fellow-man, a kinsman, interposed, by a sacrifice of his own substance, to deliver his poor brother from captivity, or restore to him his forfeited inheritance ; and hence was formed the delightful connexion of *Goel*, or *Kinsman-Redeemer*.

Besides the redemption of *individual* liberty and property, which might be effected at any time ; there was a *general* redemption once in fifty years, when all lands must revert to their original owners, and all captives must be set free. On the joyful day of jubilee, the trumpets sounded, proclaiming liberty throughout all the land : every man returned into his possession ; every man to his family : and a shadow of better things may be discerned, in the day appointed for the jubilee, being the great Day of Atonement, and in the year of its celebration being a year of rest, and a hallowed year. The argument wherewith the Lord remonstrated with his people against oppressing and enslaving each other, was His sovereign right to all their services. ‘ For unto Me the children of Israel are servants ; they are my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt : I am the Lord your God.’

This allusion brings us to consider the *second* meaning of the term redemption, as understood by the Israelites ; viz. their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, *by the mighty power and kindness of God*. When promising that deliverance, the Lord said, ‘ I will rid you out of their bondage ; and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments, and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God.’¹ And Moses, when interceding for Israel, calls them God’s *inheritance*,

¹ Exod. vi. 6.

and his *people*, which he had *redeemed*, which he had brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.¹ In the prophetic writings, we find frequent allusion to the deliverance wrought by God for his people, from Egyptian, Babylonish, or other captivity, under the same figure of redemption. ‘I gave Egypt for thy *ransom*, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.’² ‘The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together : and all that took them captives held them fast ; they refused to let them go. Their *Redeemer* is strong ; the Lord of Hosts is his name.’³

In these two modes of redemption, the one effected by a *fellow man*, and by the payment of a *ransom* ; the other, by *Jehovah* himself, by the exertion of *Almighty power and love* ; in these two combined, we see a lively representation of the twofold Redemption wrought by Christ : one part performed by him in the form of *Man*, by the price of his own most precious *blood* ; the other, performed by him as *God*, by the Almighty power of his *Spirit*. Or, we may presume, that these two modes of redemption, the former effected by *man*, the latter by *God*, denoted the necessity for the human and divine natures to meet in *One Person*, in order to effect spiritual and complete Redemption.

The very fact, that God has provided for men a Redeemer, proves that they are captives, who have forfeited not only their paternal inheritance, but their liberty also. The fact of his having provided for them a Divine Redeemer, proves that no inferior being could have redeemed them ; for God does nothing in vain, nor ever employs a superior agent, where an inferior one would suffice. But in what sense are we captives ? Many are disposed to say, with the Jews of old, ‘We were never

¹ Deut. ix. 26

² Is. xlvi. 3.

³ Jer. l. 33, 34.

in bondage to any man ; how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free ?' Alas ! brethren, our bondage is of an awful and eompliated description. As *guilty* sinners, we are shut up, under the curse of the broken law, prisoners under sentenee of temporal death, and eternal punishment after death. As *corrupt* and *helpless* sinners, we are in bondage to sin, Satan, and an evil world. We have, by our fall in Paradise, sold away our original possessions, all that we had of value ; even personal innoeney and holiness, the favour and friendship of God, joy in his presenee here, and everlasting bliss in his glory hereafter. We have sold ourselves to the most tyrannical and eruel master, who is also most subtle. His subtlety is amazing, in blinding his eaptives to their real eondition, and thereby depriving them of all desire for freedom. He finds it equally easy to bind them with fetters of *silver*, or with fetters of *iron*. Those of them who are rich in this world's goods, he can easily persuade to take up their portion here, and remain quietly, and even pleasantly, under his yoke. And those who have to labour for daily bread, and struggle with all the evils of life, he as easily enslaves, by bowing down their spirit, and engrossing their minds by earthly cares, if not tempting them to relieve their poverty by criminal aets. In this deplorable bondage we must for ever have remained ; for none of us eould, by any means, have redeemed either his own soul, or that of his brother, nor given to God a ransom for him.¹ The Redemption of our souls demanded a priee more precious than earth eould produce, or the highest creature in heaven could offer. But 'from the height of his sanetuary did the LORD look down ; from heaven did he behold the earth ; to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that

¹ Ps. xlix. 7, 8.

were appointed to death.¹ The Son of God, himself the eternal Jehovah, became our *Kinsman*, after the flesh, that he might have ‘*a right to redeem*’ us. As Son of Man, he gave his life a *Ransom* for many,² being at once the *Ransom* and the *Ransomer*. By his Righteousness and by his Sacrifice he paid the price of our release from sin and all its effects; by his Intercession he procures it, and by his Spirit he applies it. In consideration of this all-sufficient satisfaction made to the divine honour and justice, the Father says of every penitent sinner, ‘Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a Ransom.’³ And the sinner, while deeply conscious that he deserves the full weight of God’s indignation, may yet, trusting to that blessed Ransom, say, ‘Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:’⁴ ‘In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.’⁵

In answer to the objection, that *free forgiveness* and *full satisfaction* are inconsistent with each other, Hurrian remarks, ‘It is Christ that makes the satisfaction, ‘and the redeemed are those that receive the forgiveness. ‘Christ might claim it as a debt, but to us it is all free ‘grace. It was free grace in God, to find out and appoint a Surety, and accept the payment from him, ‘which might have been peremptorily required of us: ‘It was free grace in God, to send his own Son, made ‘of a woman, and made under the law, that he might ‘redeem them that were under the law: It was free ‘grace in Christ to pay our debt, and purchase the eternal inheritance: It was free grace that moved God to ‘send the Holy Spirit to work faith in our hearts, and

¹ Ps. cii. 19, 20.

² Mat. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6.

³ Job xxxiii. 24.

⁴ Gal. iii. 13.

⁵ Eph. i. 7.

‘ make us partakers of Christ’s redemption. Free forgiveness and full satisfaction are not therefore inconsistent. It is not the disgrace, but the glory of our religion, that the just God and the Saviour meet in our Redeemer.’

Freedom from condemnation, however, was far from being the whole purchase of our Redeemer. Having redeemed our *persons*, he redeemed our *inheritance* also, purchasing for us a better one than we had sold; ‘an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.’¹ Of this he does not put us in immediate possession; but, like the Hebrew *Goel*, reserves it for us till the great Jubilee, when, by the resurrection of our bodies, and their reunion to our souls, the ‘purchased possession’² shall be entirely redeemed, and all remains and effects of sin shall be for ever destroyed.

But, though our Redeemer reserves in his own hand the full possession of our inheritance, he gives us, meanwhile, many precious foretastes and portions of it, as earnest and seals of the whole, until the ‘day of redemption.’ Of these, the principal are—a sense of the forgiveness of our sins; of free justification by his grace; of adoption into the family of God; deliverance from the fear of death, which had formerly kept us in bondage; and, what is the most decisive earnest of all, he gives us freedom from the dominion of sin;³ whereas we are, by nature and by practice, the servants of sin, he makes us free from sin, and servants of righteousness, and of God; redeeming us *from all iniquity*, and purifying us unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.⁴

Of the future part of our inheritance, as ‘the redeemed of the Lord,’ we can say little; but this much we know,

¹ 1 Pet. i. 4.

² Eph. i. 14.

³ Rom. vi. & vii.

⁴ Tit. ii. 14.

that ‘the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads : they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.’¹

At the coming of Messiah, the glorious liberty, dimly shadowed forth in the institution of the jubilee, was proclaimed to all nations. The blessed Jesus came, anointed by the Spirit of the Lord God, ‘to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,’ and, as a necessary step to the release of the prisoners, ‘to open the blind eyes.’² Ever since this acceptable year, the joyful sound has been heard with increasing distinctness in every part of the world. In our own favoured land, the trumpet is blown, not once in fifty years, but every day, especially every Sabbath-day, inviting every man, without exception, to return to his ‘own possession,’ the favour of God, which he lost in Paradise ; to his ‘own family,’ the children of God, from whom he there became alienated ; and to all the blessings included in the ‘glorious liberty of the children of God.’ Whence is it that this trumpet is heard with such apathy by multitudes of captives ? They hear it perhaps with decent respect, but as a sound which has so long rung in their ear, that it ceases to awaken any emotion. Besides, as we formerly remarked, these poor captives know not their real condition ; the offer of liberty rouses them not, because they fancy themselves already free. Although in bondage to corruption, they talk boastingly of their liberty, because the god of this world hath blinded their minds. Another reason for their rejection of gospel liberty is, that they have no desire for it, as a whole. They are willing enough to re-

¹ Is. xxxv. 10.

² Is. lxi. 1-3 ; Luke iv. 18-21.

ceive some portion of it, that purchased expressly by the *blood* of the Redeemer ; for they do not wish to be for ever miserable ; and conscience whispers, this *may* be the alternative. They wish for some sort of happiness hereafter, as they *must* live for ever in another state of existence. But, for the liberty effected by the *Spirit* of Christ, they have no taste. On the contrary, they are afraid to receive, with cordiality, the freedom Christ offers from the curse of God and eternal condemnation ; lest, by so doing, they should be constrained to receive the other part of Redemption, viz. deliverance from the yoke of sin and Satan. So well do they love that yoke, that, rather than shake it off, they will remain in fearful apprehension, or at least in great uncertainty, respecting their future lot.

But what a marvellous change takes place, when the sinner's eyes are opened to his state of thraldom, and a spirit of liberty is infused into his soul ! He can now no longer rest in a vague notion of freedom from sin's condemnation, while still enslaved by sin's dominion. But, knowing that if redeemed 'from the curse of the law,' he is also 'redeemed from all iniquity ;'¹—redeemed 'from among men,'² from slavery to the maxims, fashions, and carnal joys of the ungodly ; and redeemed 'to God,'³ to his fellowship, friendship, and service ; he begins immediately to assert his freedom ; and, though it costs him many a hard struggle, he, in a good measure, succeeds. As the Israelites were redeemed from bondage in Egypt, to be unto God 'a peculiar treasure, above all people, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation,'⁴ so Christians are bought with a price, to this very end, that they may glorify God in their bodies and in their spirits, which are God's. They know that they have been rescued from

¹ Tit. ii. 14. ² Rev. xiv. 4. ³ Rev. v. 9. ⁴ Exod. xix. 5, 6.

bondage, not to be their own masters, but the servants of Christ ; and, coming to Christ for pardon, they come to him also to take upon them his easy yoke and his light burden.¹

But how comes it to pass, that the yoke of Christ is ever felt to be easy and his burden light ? Does a hearty reeception of gospel liberty free the believer from any obligations to holiness, under whieh he formerly lay ? Far otherwise. By the new ties whieh it brings upon him, he is laid under unspeakably stronger obligations than before to self-denial, watchfulness, circumspeetion, separation from the world, erueifying of the flesh, and entire devotedness to God, every day and hour of his life, in every faculty of his soul and body. And while, to the best of his power, he does all this, he is yet to renounee all self-complacenceny, self-dependanee, and self-will ; to lie at the foot of God's throne, as at best a pardoned sinner, and submit to all God's will with childdlike submission.

Now, it is manifest, that ere this life can be felt easy and pleasant, ere it can be accounted *liberty*, all the natural propensities of the man must be mortified and subdued ; his pride, self-indulgenceny, independance, worldliness, and manifold corruptions ; and a whole set of new propensities, affections, tastes, and pursuits, must be im-planted in him. He must acquire something of ‘ that mind whieh was in Christ Jesus,’ ere the serviee of Christ can be to him ‘ perfect freedom.’ Therefore is the *Spirit* of Christ as needful as his *blood*, to effect complete Redemption. When the Spirit has created in the sinner ‘ a new heart and a right spirit,’ then the serviee of God beeomes his delight. Instead of finding it hard to keep holy the Sabbath-day, to eome out from the questionable or sinful amusements of the world, to divide his time

¹ Mat. xi. 28-30.

between the active and the secret duties of religion, and to walk humbly and closely with his God, all these things are now his chosen element, and deviations from them his greatest burden.

Yet it must be confessed, the believer is never wholly free from sin's hated dominion, as long as he is in the body. The experience of St Paul himself proves, that the most advanced in holiness still feel some remnants of Satan's yoke binding them down to earth, when they would rise to heaven, hindering them from the *good* they *would* do, and leading them to the *evil* they *would not* do.¹ It is inexplicable to those who have not some personal experience in the Christian life, how St Paul can affirm, in the same breath, that he is *made free from sin*,² and yet *sold under sin*;³ the *servant of righteousness and holiness*,⁴ and yet, *in captivity to the law of sin*.⁵ And the same apparent contradiction is found in the secret experience of the saints, just in proportion to the tenderness of their conscience, to their acquaintance with the breadth of God's law, and with the depths of their own heart. We may easily imagine that the stronger the captive's desire for liberty, and the greater his efforts to attain it, the more he will be galled by the fetters that still bind him, although these be incomparably lighter than the chains of many, who feel not their weight, because sitting contentedly under them. One expression of St Paul's, however, strongly marks the distinction between the servants of God, and the slaves of sin. He says, 'To whom ye *yield yourselves* servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey.'⁶ Now unquestionably, God was the Master to whom the great apostle heartily and devotedly *yielded himself*. He did not

¹ Rom. vii.

² Rom. vi. 18.

³ Rom. vii. 14.

⁴ Rom. vi. 19.

⁵ Rom. vii. 23.

⁶ Rom. vi. 16.

quietly submit to the service of sin, but struggled indefatigably against it, and this it was which made its remaining power so agonising to him. Unless, therefore, we know something of St Paul's struggles and groans for perfect freedom, it is to be feared we are still submitting to the vile tyranny of Satan.

Let us, then, delight to view Redemption as a whole, not separating its different parts, but equally desirous to possess them all; remembering that 'the way of holiness' is that in which 'the ransomed of the Lord' shall for ever walk.¹ Let us be ambitious of a high degree of that freedom, wherewith the Son makes his people free, so shall we be 'free indeed.'² Let us often use the prayer of the Psalmist, 'Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.'

In proportion as these are our desires and experience, will be our confidence in adopting the joyful declaration of Job, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' and our hope of, one day, joining in the rapturous song, 'Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' In the mean time, let us sing, with the church on earth, 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.' 'Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.'

¹ Is. xxxv. 8-10.

² John viii. 36.

ESSAY XVIII.

MEDIATOR.

A MEDIATOR is one who transacts between parties at variance, in order to bring them to an agreement. A mediator, to be available, must be intimately acquainted with the character of both the contending parties, and with their cause of quarrel. He must be deeply interested in both ; be able to sympathize with, and have influence with both.

The entrance of Sin into the world made a breach between God and man, which, to all finite intelligences, must have seemed irreparable. So many and formidable were the obstacles to reconciliation, existing on both sides, where could a Mediator be found, capable of accomplishing it ? On the part of God, were offended Justice and Holiness, which rendered any approach of a sinner, an abomination and a dishonour. On the part of man, were pride, stubbornness, alienation from, and aversion to, his offended Maker. The Mediator, then, must be ONE who could both make it honourable for God to be reconciled to man, and make man willing to be reconciled to God. For the performance of each of these great branches of his office, it was necessary that the Mediator should be both God and Man. The first step towards reconciliation, first in order of *constitution*, or *economy* (as divines express it), though not first in

order of time, was to offer an Atonement to God for the sin of man ; and, for this, it was necessary that the Mediator should be both Divine and Human. He must be Divine, to give worth and efficacy to his Atonement, as well as to uphold him under the immense burden he was to bear. He must be Human, that he might be capable of suffering and death, and that he might act as the Representative and Covenant Head of men. This union of Deity and Humanity was equally indispensable for the performance of the other great branch of the Mediatorial office, that of bringing men into a state of reconciliation and friendship with God. The Mediator must be Divine, to have power over man's heart ; power to subdue its enmity, and incline it to receive a full and free pardon, and a perfect righteousness, in which it has no merit ; power to impart love to God, and delight in his fellowship here, as well as meetness for his presence hereafter. It was necessary also, that he should continue to be Man, that he might sympathize with the infirmities and griefs of those whose cause he undertook, that he might exalt their nature, by carrying it into the presence of God, plead in that nature for the continuance of his favour to them, and in their name take possession of their restored inheritance. For this vast work, then, the only Mediator who could be available, was ‘ the Man Christ Jesus,’¹ who being God and Man, in One Person, is fully qualified to act as ‘ Days-Man,’² between God his Father, and men his brethren ; and is equally concerned to maintain the glory of God, and to secure the salvation of man.

Thus far, we have viewed the Mediation of Christ, chiefly as the medium of reconciliation between God and man ; according to his own declaration, ‘ No man com-

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

² Job ix. 33.

eth unto the Father, but by me.¹ The Mediatorial office, however, comprehends much more than simple peace-making. It comprehends all those relations which Christ bears to God and to men, as the Medium of government, legislation, and protection, of revelation, of rewards and punishments, both to the righteous and the wicked; according to another declaration of his own, ‘ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.’² It would have been derogatory to the honour of God, to transact in any way with his fallen creatures, except through a Mediator; and therefore the authority and dominion, with which Christ was invested on his ascension, were not intended for his personal reward alone, but for important ends in the divine government; to glorify God, and to humble man. We must not, however, date the commencement of Christ’s Mediatorial reign so late as from his ascension. It did not, indeed, shine forth in distinct majesty, till after his obedience unto death, his resurrection, and exaltation to the right hand of the Father. But it began in the very first exercise of mercy towards fallen Adam; it was expressed in the first promise;³ we have already traced its early displays in ‘the Angel Jehovah;’ in the Ruler in Israel, whose ‘goings forth have been of old, from everlasting;’ in the eternal ‘Wisdom,’ whose delights have been ever with the sons of men. As the interposition of a Mediator began at the first entrance of sin into the world, it will cease when the elect shall have been freed from sin and all its effects; and when all impenitent sinners shall have received their doom. The last office which Christ will execute, as Mediator, is that of ‘Judge of quick and dead.’ That solemn office executed; all his friends saved with an everlasting salvation; and all his enemies put under his feet,

¹ John xiv. 6.

² Mat. xxviii. 18.

³ Gen. iii. 15.

the Son shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.¹

A right understanding of the whole Gospel, depends greatly upon a right understanding of the Mediatorial office of Christ. For want of distinguishing what is said of him as God, from what is said of him as Mediator, we are very apt to be confused in our ideas concerning him ; and this leads to serious errors, in practice, as well as in doctrine. Of the practical errors we shall speak, towards the conclusion. Meanwhile we remark, that many expressions are used in Scripture, of the Mediatorial dignity of Christ, which seem to contradict others used of his Divine dignity. We know that, as the infinite and eternal Jehovah, the Almighty Ruler over all, his kingdom never had a beginning, nor will it ever have an end ; that he can neither be abased, nor exalted ; can be inferior to none,—subordinate to none. But, in the language of Theology, there may be *inferiority of office*, without any *inferiority of essence*. And this inferiority our blessed Mediator on all occasions confessed ; nay, he gloried in being the *Servant* of the Father ;² in having *received* from him a kingdom ;³ in all things being *delivered* unto him of his Father.⁴ While, therefore, we zealously maintain his equality with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the glory of the Godhead, we need not fear to acknowledge his inferiority as Man, which is as truly his glory ; that for which he receives the praises of the heavenly hosts, and for which he has received from the Father ‘a name that is above every name.’⁵

For the further illustration of the Mediation of Christ, let us turn, for a moment, to the typical mediation of

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

² John viii. 29.

³ Luke xxii. 29.

⁴ Mat. xi. 27.

⁵ Phil. ii. 5-11.

Moses, who, of all men that ever lived, most resembled the Saviour, in office, and in character. In reading his history, we find that he ‘stood between’ God and his people, not only ‘*that he might not destroy them;*’¹ but also, ‘*to show them the word of the Lord;*’² The patience, disinterestedness, and importunity, of his intercession for the people, can never be sufficiently admired ; and were beautifully typical of the same qualities in the all prevailing intercession of our Divine Mediator. But the office of Moses comprehended much more than the procuring of pardon and favour to God’s rebellious people. He had to act not only as priest, but also as prophet and as king. He had to reveal to Israel all the will of God concerning them ; to deliver to them his laws and commands ; to present to God their petitions : in short, to be the only medium of communication between God and his people.

The Israelites, overawed by the terrors of Sinai, themselves entreated the interposition of a mediator. ‘When they saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, the people removed and stood afar off ; and said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear : but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’³ According to this request, which the Lord was pleased to approve, saying, ‘They have well said all that they have spoken,’⁴ the people stood afar off ; and Moses alone drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. This request of Israel was specially honoured by God, in that he took occasion from it to reveal, in clear terms, that Divine Mediator, whom he had appointed between himself and the spiritual Israel, and who, in due time, was to rise out of the house of Jacob.⁵

¹ Deut. ix. 18–20.

² Deut. v. 5.

³ Exod. xx. 18, 19.

⁴ Deut. v. 23–28.

⁵ Deut. xviii. 15–20.

The Lord said unto Moses, ‘ They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth ; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.’ This prediction is twice quoted in the book of Acts, as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth;¹ and the occasion on which it was given, clearly proves, that it was in his office of *mediator* that Moses most eminently typified the Lord Jesus : and that as the Israelites could not receive God’s law, except ‘ by the hand of a mediator ;’² neither can the Church, in Messiah’s dispensation, receive it but by his hand. This confirms what we endeavoured to explain above ; that Christ is *Mediator*, not only as the Medium of *reconciliation*, but of *government* and *legislation*, between God and men.

But, to return to Moses, no mere man was ever so highly honoured, whether we consider the near access to the HOLY ONE which he was privileged to enjoy, and which, on one occasion, left visible tokens of glory on his countenance;³ or the high office he held as mediator between God and his people, through whom the will and law of God were made known to the world, and by whose hand the grand scaffolding was raised, for the building of the Church of Christ. The office of mediator, however, while it raised Moses to eminent honour, exposed him, at the same time, to arduous toils and severe sufferings. In the ardour of his intercessory devotions, he twice underwent a fast of forty days and nights. He had to bear the burden of the whole congregation. The effects of their perverseness, discontent, rebellions, and ingratitude,

¹ Acts iii. 22 ; vii. 37. ² Gal. iii. 19. ³ Exod. xxxiv. 29.

fell upon him, both by personal attacks, and from the hand of the Lord for their sakes. Their guilt was, in a manner, laid upon him : for the Lord called them *his* people, whom *he* had brought up.¹ And, although in a very different sense from that in which Christ died as Mediator for his people, Moses may be said, in a certain sense, to have died *for the sin of Israel*. As a sinner, indeed, he deserved to die on his own account : but Israel's murmurs were the immediate cause of his impatience and disobedience ; and he told them, ‘The Lord was angry with me for *your* sakes.’² David also says, ‘They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses *for their sakes*.³ Earnestly did Moses beseech the Lord to take away this cup from him ; to let him go over and see the good land beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon :⁴ but he, who had so often prevailed with God for others, could not prevail for himself ; and thus was shown the imperfection of this eminent saint, and the utter impossibility of any but a *typical* mediation being effected by a creature, by one who himself needed the Mediation of Christ. Imperfect as he doubtless was, Moses exhibited dispositions wonderfully resembling those of Jesus. His meekness, in bearing personal insult and injury, was combined with the most ardent zeal for the honour of God, which rendered him bold and severe in rebuking sin, and unflinching in the punishment of it, however numerous and powerful might be the transgressors. In disinterestedness, also, in contempt of this world’s riches and honours, in the equity of his administration, and in the unwearied patience with which he laboured and pleaded for the people, in spite of all their provocations, Moses was a most exact type of our blessed Mediator.

Deut. ix. 12. ² Deut. iv. 21. ³ Ps. cxi. 32. ⁴ Deut. iii. 23–27.

We have yet one more point of resemblance and comparison to notice, between the typical and the true Mediator; viz. that they were each respectively, *Mediators of a covenant*. Comparing the two, St. Paul says, Jesus is ‘the Mediator of a *better covenant*, which was established upon better promises.’¹ The comparison here is not between the covenant of Works and the covenant of Grace; for that mediated by Moses partook of the nature of both. It was a covenant made *with Israel, as a nation under the visible government of Jehovah*; promising temporal blessings on condition of obedience; and so far, it was a covenant of Works. But in its ceremonial part, it contained all the elements of the covenant of Grace; the same covenant by which Christians now are saved: and during its dispensation, believers enjoyed all the privileges of that covenant, which, having been made with Abraham, for all his spiritual seed, ‘the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul.’² But the covenant of Christ exceeds that of Moses, in that it is entirely a *spiritual covenant*; in that it is *everlasting* and *universal*. Whereas the Gospel was revealed in the Mosaic rites under types and figures, it is now revealed by the preaching of Christ and his Apostles. Whereas the covenant was formerly confined to one nation; and even in that nation was intended to pass away, and make room for a better, a new covenant; the covenant which Christ mediates is offered to the acceptance of all men, in all nations; and it is unchangeable, everlasting; that is, it will endure, as a Mediatorial covenant, as long as men need a Mediator; and the blessings it secures are eternal. This covenant will come more directly under our consideration, when we advance to the study of Christ as Covenant-Head of his people.

¹ Heb. viii. 6.

² Gal. iii. 17.

Meantime we close our remarks upon it, by pointing out its superiority over the Mosaic covenant, in its being ratified with *richer blood*; not the blood of calves and of goats, but that of Christ himself: and in the infinite *superiority of the Mediator*; being that of a Son over a faithful servant; that of ‘God manifest in the flesh’ over a frail, fallible mortal.¹

It is scarcely necessary to point out the exactness wherewith Jesus fulfilled the descriptions given of him by God to Moses, ‘He shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.’ Every reader of the Gospel must be familiar with such sayings as the following:—‘I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.’² ‘The Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.’³

We are now to inquire what *should be* the practical effects of this Mediatorial dispensation; and what *are* the actual effects upon the generality of professing Christians. Surely the appointment of a Mediator between God and men, should teach sinners deep humiliation, a holy fear of God, ardent gratitude, and strong encouragement. Should we not be *humbled* to reflect that, as sinners, we are so obnoxious to the wrath and vengeance of the HOLY ONE, that he cannot have any friendly intercourse with us, except through the interposition of another!

Not only is the sinner’s first approach to God shut up to this one way; but after he has been pardoned, accepted, justified, adopted, and sanctified, through Christ, he must still, to the end of his course, come in the same way. He cannot put in a single petition to the Court of Heaven, or receive a single favour from it; he cannot offer a single act of homage or of service to his Almighty

¹ Heb. iii. 1–6.

² John viii. 28.

³ John xii. 49.

Sovereign, but it must pass through the hands of the Mediator. The richest oblation he can bring, if he were to offer his own body as a sacrifice to God, must be utterly rejected, as loathsome and offensive, if presented *immediately*, that is, without respect to the *Mediator* whom God has appointed. Surely, then, we should greatly fear and stand in awe of this holy Being, even in approaching him in his own appointed way. Yet our fear should be mingled with strong *encouragement*, when coming in that way. We bring a stronger plea than we could have had in a state of personal innocence. For what is human innocence, or human merit (if there could be such a thing), to the perfect Righteousness of God, which is put upon all them that believe? The fact, that God has provided for us such a Mediator, should fill us with joy and gratitude unspeakable, and bring us, with humble boldness, mingled with shame, to the mercy-seat. We should constantly remember how vile and unworthy are our best services, and that we owe all our salvation to Christ alone.

And, while provision is made, in this appointment, for the abasement of the sinner, equal provision is made for the glory of God, in the manifestation of his great attributes. His justice and holiness are displayed in his *requiring* a Mediator; his wisdom and goodness in *providing* such a Mediator, so effectual, so Divine. And lastly, the highest possible honour is done to Christ himself, in his being made the Centre of union, of reconciliation and friendship, the Ruler and Governor for God, to man; in whom, according to the Father's will, all things are gathered together; all things, in heaven and earth, even in him.¹

Such, we say, *ought to be* the effects of a Mediatorial

¹ Eph. i. 10.

economy, on the views of a sinner, respecting himself, respecting God, and respecting Christ. But alas! for the perverseness and desperate wickedness of man! He defeats, as far as in him lies, all these gracious and important ends. For, whereas in the Mediation of Jesus Christ, he ought to see grounds for *abasing self*, for *glorifying and fearing God*, and for *adoring and delighting in Christ*; he reverses each of these views. He sees, in that very transaction which declares most awfully God's inflexible justice, and abhorrence to sin, a permission to commit sin without remorse. He finds, in the Mediatorial scheme, a soothing opiate for conscience, whereby *self* is *flattered*, *God dishonoured*, and *Christ despised*. Because God has, in so wonderful a manner, provided for the remission of sin; therefore ungrateful man thinks it an easy thing for Him to pardon it; because God has shown, in the death of his beloved Son, that nothing less than perfect Righteousness and a pure Divine Sacrifice can satisfy his just demands; therefore man thinks God requires so little, that it is entirely at his own option, to serve him, or to serve him not. And, because the eternal Son descended, for our sakes, to become the Servant of the Father; therefore base man degrades him from his Divine honours, and refuses him for a Master.

We have indeed great cause for thankfulness, that God's law is spoken to us, not from Sinai's blazing top, but from mount Sion; not by an earthly mediator, but by Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant. But our God is still 'a consuming fire.' And 'if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.'

ESSAY XIX.

JESUS, OR SAVIOUR.

THE term SAVIOUR is often applied to God, irrespective of the work of Christ, as the only *Deliverer* from dangers, temporal or spiritual. This seems to be its meaning in many passages of the Old Testament, such as the following,—‘ I, *even I*, am the Lord, and besides me *there is* no Saviour.’¹ ‘ They forgat God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt.’² In this general sense, David calls God his Saviour, though he doubtless regarded his temporal deliverances as typical of the spiritual deliverance which he enjoyed through the Saviour to come. In the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hands of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul, he sang, ‘ The Lord is my Rock,—and my Refuge, my Saviour; *thou savest me from violence.*’³ In one passage of the New Testament, the name Saviour seems similarly applied; God is there said to be ‘ the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.’⁴

The term *saviour* or *deliverer* was also given, in a subordinate sense, to men raised up by God to deliver his people from their enemies; such were Othniel, Gideon, David, &c.⁵ Nehemiah, in his penitential and grateful

¹ Is. xlivi. 11. ² Ps. cxi. 21. ³ 2 Sam. xxii. 2.

⁴ 1 Tim. iv. 10. ⁵ Judges iii. 9–15.

prayer, says, ‘ In the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven ; and, according to thy manifold mercies, thou gavest them *saviours*, who *saved them out of the hand of their enemies.*’¹ All those human saviours, however, were types of Him, whose coming was thus foretold by Isaiah, ‘ He shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.’²

The name Jesus, then, pre-eminently belongs to the eternal Son of God, who became Man, that he might be *Jehovah-Salvation*, or *Jehorah the Saviour*, the literal signification of the name. Before proceeding to the direct contemplation of this blessed Saviour, let us take a hasty view of the human deliverer, who most clearly typified him in this office, and who was honoured to bear his name, Joshua.

The office assigned to Joshua was to go over Jordan before the people, and cause them to inherit the promised land. In the execution of this high office, Joshua had to contend with hosts of powerful foes, and to face dangers innumerable ; but he never drew back from the path of duty ; he ‘ left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses,’ but ‘ made war a long time,’ and at length ‘ took the whole land,’ and gave it for an inheritance unto Israel.³ Great, however, as was the personal valour of Joshua, he did not encourage the people to trust indolently in him for deliverance, while they indulged themselves in ease and security. After many hard struggles, and successful conflicts, they were strongly bent upon present ease, and negleeted the complete extirpation of the Canaanites. But this was contrary to the exhortations of their faithful deliverer, who, now by rebuking their sloth, now by assurance of suc-

¹ Neh. ix. 27.

² Is. xix. 20.

³ Josh. xi. 15, 18, 23.

cess, stirred them up to fresh attacks, and fresh victories, saying, ‘How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?’¹ ‘Thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.’² In his whole conduct, Joshua displayed the most admirable self-denial, and generous attention to the welfare of the people ; he was honoured as a chosen instrument to retain Israel in the worship and service of God ; and his character is one of the most faultless recorded in Scripture. Yet Joshua was only the instrument of that Divine Leader who appeared to him in human form, as ‘*Captain of the Lord’s host*’³ thus intimating, in the most striking manner, that He was the true Deliverer, both of the Hebrew nation, and the spiritual Israel ; and that it should be *in human form* that he would effect the great deliverance. We have already stated the grounds on which this ‘*Man*’ is presumed to have been the Second Person in the Trinity, anticipating his Incarnation.⁴

Now, then, let us look unto Jesus, without a type between ; let us hasten with delight to the numerous testimonies to his saving power, borne by God himself, by angels, and by inspired men. Hear, in the counsels of Heaven, the Father declare, ‘I have laid *help* upon *One that is mighty*:’⁵ hear the Son declare of himself, that he comes ‘*mighty to save*.’⁶ Hear the angelic message concerning his name, ‘Thou shalt call his name JESUS ; for he shall *save* his people from their sins ;’⁷ and the announcement of his birth by the angel to the shepherds, ‘Unto you is born this day a *Saviour*, which is Christ the Lord.’⁸ Then hear Zacharias speak of him as the

¹ Joshua xviii. 3. ² Joshua xvii. 18. ³ Joshua v. 13–15.

⁴ See ‘Angel-Jehovah.’⁵ Ps. lxxxix. 19. ⁶ Is. lxiii. 1.

⁷ Mat. i. 21.

⁸ Luke ii. 11.

Horn of Salvation, of which the Lord had spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began.¹ Listen to the joyful confession of old Simeon, that his eyes had seen, in the Infant Jesus, *God's Salvation*.² And above all, hearken to the numerous declarations of Jesus Christ himself, during his ministry ; that he came ‘to save that which was lost,’³ ‘not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them ;’ that ‘God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved.’⁴ To these, add the testimonies of inspired Apostles after the ascension of Jesus, ‘that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,’⁵ and that ‘there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.’⁶

As Joshua was fitted for his high office, by being ‘a man in whom was the Spirit ;’ and invested in that office, by Moses putting some of his honour upon him, that all the people might be obedient : so Jesus was pre-eminently ‘a Man in whom was the Spirit,’ for the Spirit was given to him without measure ; and the Father puts so much of his own honour upon the Man Christ Jesus, that he commands all men to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He has appointed him to subdue all the enemies of his chosen people, and bring them to the heavenly Canaan, and cause them to inherit it.

But, it may be asked, Could not this Deliverer, being Almighty, have performed the work assigned him, without exposing himself to personal toil and conflict ? In one sense, indeed, the Almighty *can* do all things ; but in another sense, he *cannot* do any thing inconsistent with his own glory, and the harmony of his perfections. Therefore, the taunting assertion of the scribes and rulers

¹ Luke i. 69

² Luke ii. 30.

³ Luke xix. 10.

⁴ John iii. 17.

⁵ 1 Tim. i. 15.

⁶ Acts iv. 12.

was, in one sense, true : ‘*He saved others, himself he cannot save.*’ Jesus could not, consistently with the Divine justice and holiness, *save others*, and yet *save himself*. ‘*It behoved Christ to suffer ;*¹ the Captain of our salvation must be ‘made perfect through sufferings.’² This necessity arose out of the nature of the obstacles lying in the way of his people’s inheritance. These obstacles may be classed under two heads; *first*, the *condemnation* of the *law*, involving *death*, temporal and eternal, with the total want of *title* to the inheritance; *second*, the power of *indwelling sin*, the corruption that is in the *world*, and the temptation of *Satan*.

Now, that he might overcome each of these classes of obstacles, ‘*it behoved Christ to suffer.*’ He could not avert from his people the *condemnation* they merited, and bestow on them a *title* to the inheritance, which, for their own sakes, they merited not; he could not change for them the aspect of *death*, making it, instead of the king of terrors, the gate of everlasting life, without enduring, in his own sacred Person, all the punishment which was due to them; without performing, in their nature, a perfect righteousness to be imputed to them, and without submitting to the stroke of death. His victory, indeed, was not one that cost him little. His mortal life was one continued course of self-denial, labour, and suffering, of contention with wicked men and evil spirits; and in his latter conflicts, he had, in addition to these, the wrath of his heavenly Father to meet. Yet ‘he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded him.’ He deprived the law of its condemning power over his people; spoiled principalities and powers; ‘abolished death, and brought life and immortality to

¹ Luke xxiv. 46.

² Heb. ii. 10.

light.' ‘ And being made perfect, he became the *Author of eternal salvation* unto all them that obey him.’¹

Thus, the *first* class of obstacles to his people’s inheritance was for ever removed, when Jesus rose and ascended up on high. But he knew they were still beset with enemies, which, unless defeated, would destroy them, as surely as those he had already conquered. He had, indeed, taken possession, in their name, of the Land of Promise; but they were not qualified to enjoy that blessed Land, nor could they enter it, till freed from sin. He came ‘ *to save his people from their sins*,’ from the *dominion* and *pollution* of sin, as well as from its guilt and punishment. And this important part of salvation he has been carrying on ever since his exaltation, being exalted a ‘ Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins.’² In consequence of his Atonement and Intercession, he has received from the Father the gift of the Holy Ghost, by whose all-powerful influences he saves his people from the *world*, the *flesh*, and the *devil*, those cruel foes who are daily in hand to swallow them up; and makes them *meet* for the inheritance that God has promised them.

All this he does, however, not by protecting them from conflict, but by leading them to victory; by making them put their feet upon the necks of their enemies; by rebuking them when they rest satisfied with present attainments; and stirring them up to new efforts, by the promise of ultimate and complete triumph. This triumph, it is true, is never complete on earth; as long as we remain here, we must be harassed by temptations without, and by corruptions within. The best of us, alas! too much resemble the tribes of Israel, of whom Joshua writes, ‘ They drove not out the Canaanites, but

¹ Heb. v. 9.

² Acts v. 31.

the Canaanites dwell among them unto this day.' But after our conflict with the last enemy, Death, we shall be made 'more than conquerors through him that loved us ;' 'in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts ;'¹ and every one of the saved will rapturously exclaim, 'There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel, all came to pass.'

While salvation flows unquestionably from Christ alone ; it is sometimes, in Scripture, ascribed to subordinate agents, such as to *Faith*, 'Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace ;'² to the *Word*, 'Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls ;'³ to *Baptism*, 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us ;'⁴ to our *fellow-men*, 'He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death.'⁵ We are even exhorted to *save ourselves*, 'Save yourselves from this untoward generation.'⁶ 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.'⁷

All these, however, are merely instruments in the hand of the Spirit, and of no power or efficacy in themselves. Faith is the hand whereby we receive or lay hold of salvation ; the Word makes it known to us ; Baptism is the sign and seal of our admission to its privileges ; our fellow-men are employed to persuade us to accept and embrace it ; and our own exertions are the appointed means of our partaking of it ; we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for this very reason, because it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

¹ Zech. xiv. 21.

² Luke vii. 50.

³ James i. 21.

⁴ 1 Pet. iii. 21.

⁵ James v. 20.

⁶ Acts ii. 40.

⁷ Philip. ii. 12.

Besides, all these means of salvation are themselves the free gift of God. Every step we take towards obtaining salvation is the result of free grace. The first spark of life in the soul is kindled by quickening grace; *faith* is the gift of God;¹ *repentance unto salvation* is given by the exalted Saviour;² a good *hope* is through grace;³ *good works* flow from the same source, for we are ‘*created in Christ Jesus unto good works;*’⁴ *continuance* in faith and holiness is also the effect of grace;⁵ *eternal life* is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.⁶

Thus, in every point of view, from first to last, ‘salvation belongeth unto the Lord;’⁷ and all the happy partakers of it are ready to declare, that they got not the land in possession through their own sword, neither was it their own arm that helped them, but God’s right hand, and his arm, and the light of his countenance, because he had a favour unto them.⁸

The connexion which we have attempted to trace, of the different parts of salvation, one with another, and with the great Source from whence they flow, is clearly set forth in the Apostolic Writings. A beautiful summary of salvation is contained in the following passage from Titus. ‘After that the kindness and love of *God our Saviour* toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his *mercy* he *saved us*, by the washing of *regeneration*, and *renewing* of the *Holy Ghost*, which he shed on us abundantly *through Jesus Christ our Saviour*; that, being *justified by his grace*, we should be made *heirs* according to the hope of *eternal life.*’⁹

So precious, so inestimable, being the salvation offered

¹ Eph. ii. 1-8.

² Acts v. 31.

³ 2 Thes. ii. 16.

⁴ Eph. ii. 10.

⁵ Philip. i. 6.

⁶ Rom. vi. 23.

⁷ Ps. iii. 8.

⁸ Ps. xliv. 3.

⁹ Titus iii. 4-7.

in the Gospel ; so free on the part of God, and yet requiring such unremitting exertion on the part of man ; two questions surely ought to engross the serious attention of every one within reach of the joyful sound. These questions are, ‘ *What must I do to be saved?*’¹ and ‘ *What can I do, in order that others may be saved?*’ And yet, when we look around, how few seem really engrossed by the subject of their own and others’ salvation ! Instead of ‘ What must I do to be saved ?’ most men seem to inquire, What must I do to be rich, great, gay, or comfortable ? What must I do to obtain the largest portion of present enjoyment, by the smallest risk or trouble ? How shall I best ensure ease and comfort to myself and my family, during our stay in this world ? Now, it is not that the generality of men in a Christian land are wholly forgetful that they have souls to be saved : the dreadful mistake is, that they take for granted *they are saved*. They have been baptised, they attend Christian ordinances, *they* have no doubt but they ‘ *believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,*’² which is the only requisite for salvation ; and why should *any one* doubt the sincerity of their faith ? Ah ! brethren, we cannot, it is true, see your hearts : we dare not pronounce you insincere. But there are tokens in your outward conduct, which alarm our fears for you ; and we pray you to examine if those fears be not well grounded. Could you set so much value on the riches of this world, which our Saviour pronounced so unfavourable to the state of the soul ? Could you seek so eagerly the places of honour and preferment in this passing scene, or relish so highly the pleasures and amusements, which, to say the least of them, have a tendency to weaken the power of religion within you ? Could you pay such minute at-

¹ Acts xvi. 30.

² Acts xvi. 31.

tention to the little refinements and luxuries of life,—if you had ever seriously reflected on the alternative of your soul being *lost* or *saved*? No : if you had ever truly considered this alternative ; at least, if you lived under the permanent influence of it, it would impart a dignity to your whole mind and character ; raising you above all the petty objects of earthly desire, and making you willing rather to lose the whole world, than run any risk of losing your own soul. You would feel, Is my soul safe? Then *I need* little more. Is it not yet saved? Then *I can enjoy nothing* till I have a good hope that it is so.

You may indeed argue, That attention to the duties of the present life forms one principal evidence of salvation : and to this we quite agree. But unless the ‘*one thing needful*’ be kept decidedly uppermost, if it form but one of the many things that engross your thoughts, instead of the one that regulates all the rest, be sure it will obtain but a scanty share of time and consideration ; whereas, if you assign to it its proper place, all other important things will be done far better than if they were your chief study. Oh! we entreat you, consider in time. Delay not to flee from the wrath to come, lest you should, one day, have to make the doleful lamentation, ‘The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and *we are not saved.*’¹

But if you assure us, that you have good grounds for satisfaction concerning your *own* state ; then, the *first* great question set at rest, you have more leisure to entertain the *second*,—What are your feelings respecting *the salvation of others*? Is it your heart’s desire and prayer, for all in whom you are interested, ‘*that they may be saved?*’ Can you reckon lightly of any ills that may

¹ Jer. viii. 20.

befall them, provided you have a good hope that they are *saved*? Or, though you see them surrounded with every outward blessing, are you uneasy and anxious, lest they should *not be saved*? Again, what interest do you feel in the salvation of men in general? And what efforts are you making to forward this great object? Is it possible, that they who are assured of their own salvation, can feel indifferent as to the salvation of their fellow sinners, and even encourage them in occupations, which, if not altogether incompatible with morality, can hardly consist with a right state of the soul? This single test might, we think, convince many, how little they regard the salvation of their fellow sinners.

It is feared that many call Christ *their Saviour*, who have very indistinct notions what he saves them *from*, what he saves them *to*, and the immense *price* at which their salvation was procured. Many would gladly ‘look to him, and be saved,’ if they need not, at the same time, ‘wash their hearts from wickedness, that they might be saved.’

Let us, then, who claim an interest in the great salvation, see that the things that accompany salvation appear and abound in us. And what are those things? Admiring gratitude for the grace that has saved us; ardent love to Him who is the Author of our salvation; strong confidence in the power and faithfulness of our God, mingled with fear and trembling, lest we should come short of his great salvation; a longing desire that all men should be saved; and that the Cross of Christ should become, to all, the power of God unto salvation. And let us not only look back with comfort to past experiences, when God heard us, and *became our Salvation*; but seek for present enjoyment of the same; waiting and

praying to hear his voice, saying unto our soul, ‘*I am thy Salvation.*’ Let us now begin, with feeble tones, that song which we shall hereafter sing with a loud voice,—‘Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.’

ESSAY XX.

CHRIST, MESSIAH, OR ANOINTED.

THESE names are all synonymous ; CHRIST being the Greek word, MESSIAH the Hebrew, for ANOINTED. The title is taken from a well known ceremony among the Jews, of pouring oil on the head of those destined for peculiar services ; in token of their being consecrated or set apart by God for that service, and qualified by his Spirit for the right discharge of it.

The offices to which men were consecrated by this rite, were those of *king*, *priest*, or *prophet*. We read that Saul, David, Solomon, and others, were anointed to be *kings* ;¹ Aaron and his sons, with peculiar solemnity, to be *priests* ;² Elisha, to be the *prophet* of the Lord, in the room of Elijah.³ The *Israelites*, as a nation, were sometimes called the Lord's *anointed* ; as in the 105th Psalm, 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.'⁴ They were *set apart* to be God's peculiar people, to do him honour and service ; and therefore were said to be *anointed*.

But the name belongs, truly and pre-eminently, to the eternal Son of God, the Second Person in the sacred Trinity ; who, having been, from all eternity, consecrated to the work of Redemption, was *anointed* with the

¹ 1 Sam. x. 1 ; xvi. 13.

² Lev. viii. 12.

³ 1 Kings xix. 16.

⁴ Ps. cv. 15.

Holy Ghost, given to him without measure, that he might discharge, to God's chosen people, the combined offices of *Prophet*, *Priest*, and *King*. In his Divine nature, indeed, he needed not, nor was susceptible of, any anointing : but in his Human nature, as subordinate to the Father, and bearing all the sinless infirmities of man, he needed anointing, both to authorise and to qualify him for the great work he undertook.

How wonderful is the honour thus put upon man's Redemption ! How vast the glory thereby rendered to the Trinity in Unity ! The work is performed by the Son ; he is enabled to perform it by the Holy Ghost ; and both his appointment to, and qualification for, the work, come from the Father, who anoints him.

The title Messiah, or Anointed, does not occur frequently in the Old Testament. The earliest mention of the Saviour, under that title, is perhaps in the song of Hannah, who, at a period when there was yet no king over Israel, said, ' The Lord shall give strength unto his *King*, and exalt the horn of his *Anointed*'.¹ In the Psalms, many glorious predictions are found of that Anointed One who, springing from the house of David, was to reign over Jews and Gentiles, yea, to the uttermost parts of the earth, for ever.² Isaiah, in the eleventh chapter of his prophecy, sets forth all the varied graces and gifts of the Spirit, wherewith Messiah was to be endowed,³ to qualify him for his glorious office ; for his universal reign of meekness and righteousness, of equity and faithfulness ; but the name Anointed is not used in this chapter. In the sixty-first Chapter, however, the prophet is more explicit. In words unspeakably precious to every afflicted and penitent soul, he thus introduces Messiah :—⁴ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon

¹ 1 Sam. ii. 10.

² Ps. ii., xlvi., lxxxix. &c.

³ Is. xi. 1-4.

Me, because the Lord hath *anointed* me to preach good tidings to the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to comfort all that mourn,'¹ &c.

The only prophetical intimation of the Lord's Anointed, found in our Bible in the Hebrew tongue, is that remarkable one of Daniel, wherein were foretold so distinctly, the precise time when 'Messiah the Prince' should appear; the stupendous objects for which he should be 'cut off,' and the awful events which should ensue, to 'the city and the sanctuary.'²

But although the name Messiah is not often mentioned by the prophets, their writings abound in predictions and promises, which were well understood by their countrymen to belong to that great Deliverer alone.

'The ancient prophets had foretold that the Messias 'should be *God* and *Man*, *exalted* and *abased*, *Master* 'and *Servant*, *Priest* and *Victim*, *King* and *Subject*, 'Mortal and a *Conqueror of Death*, *rich* and *poor*, a 'Conqueror glorious, yet a *Man of griefs*, involved in our 'infirmities, in a state of great humiliation. All these 'seeming contrarieties were to be reconciled in the per- 'son of Messiah, as they really did meet in the per- 'son of Christ. It was known that the Messiah was to 'be born of a virgin, of the tribe of Judah, of the race 'of David, in the village of Bethlehem; that he was to 'continue for ever; that his name should be continued 'as long as the sun; that he was the great prophet pro- 'mised in the law; that he was both the Son and the 'Lord of David; that he was to perform great miracles; 'that he should restore all things; that he should die 'and rise again, that Elias should be the forerunner of 'his appearance, that a proof of his coming should be 'the cure of the lepers, life restored to the dead, and the

¹ Is. lxi. 1-3.

² Dan. x. 24-26.

‘ Gospel preached to the poor ; that he should not destroy the law, but should perfect and fulfil it ; that he should be a Stone of offence, and a Stumbling block, against which many should bruise themselves ; that he should suffer oppositions and contradictions ; and that a strange people should come and submit themselves to his discipline.’¹

Since, then, the ancient Hebrews had such clear views of Messiah, how can we account for the confused notions entertained of him, at the period of the Gospel History, by their descendants, who still professed to believe the writings of the prophets, and to revere the opinions of the fathers ? Why did they take up one class of predictions respecting him, and reject the other, expecting a temporal Prince and Conqueror, who should neither suffer nor die ? This does indeed seem strange ; but is it any more inexplicable than the ignorance and practical unbelief of multitudes in our own day, who, professing to believe in Christ, in all the offices and characters ascribed to him by prophets, evangelists, and apostles, do, nevertheless, reject and overlook those offices of his which they dislike, such as the uncompromising Lawgiver, and the inexorable Judge ; and look to those only which, in their apprehension, favour their sloth and self-indulgence ; such as the Preacher of peace and love, and the Intercessor with God.

Like other nominal believers, the Jews, in our Saviour’s time, seem to have formed their creed, not from Revelation, but from their own prepossessions, prejudices, and carnal desires ; whence it naturally followed, that they could not recognize in Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah whom they expected.

At the time of our Lord’s coming, however, there ex-

¹ Cruden.

isted a strong expectation in Judea, and over a great part of the known world, of the appearance of some illustrious person. Herod, on hearing of the birth of the Infant Jesus, trembled for the stability of his throne, and sent to inquire of the chief priests, *Where Christ should be born?*¹ Their reply proves that they were not ignorant of their own Scriptures; but it convicts them of most culpable remissness, or rather of most wilful blindness, in not examining into the claims of this wonderful Infant, born at Bethlehem, and born of a virgin.¹ Had they examined, they would have found ample testimonies to his Messiahship. But, with slothful negligence, they slumbered on, till their attention was once more roused by the preaching of John the Baptist. The character and doctrine of the Baptist caused so great a sensation in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, that it is said, ‘The people were in expeetation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were *the Christ* or not,’² and a deputation of priests and Levites was sent to ask him, ‘Who art thou?’³ evidently expecting that he would say he was the Christ. This claim John renounced in the strongest terms, confessing his immense inferiority to Messiah, and his unworthiness to perform to him the lowest office. But, at the same time, he claimed the honour of being that herald, predicted by the prophets, who was to prepare his way before him. ‘I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.’⁴

In discharge of his office of herald, the Baptist announced Messiah as already come, and standing among the people. ‘There standeth One among you, whom ye know not;’⁵ and this unknown, but glorious One, he

¹ See ‘Child Jesus.’

² Luke iii. 15. ³ John i. 19–23.

⁴ Is. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1.

⁵ John i. 26–29.

described as ‘the Lamb of God, as the ‘Bridegroom’ of the Church, as One who, ‘coming after him,’ yet ‘was before him,’¹ for whose manifestation to Israel, he came baptizing with water, and who would himself baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. John further testified of Jesus, that he was ‘from heaven,’ and ‘above all;’ that the Spirit was given to him without measure; that ‘the Father had given all things into his hand;’ and that faith in Him was the only means to escape the wrath of God, and obtain everlasting life. The testimony of John was confirmed by the visible *anointing* given to Jesus, at his baptism, when the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descended like a dove, and lighted upon him; and lo! a voice from heaven saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’² Yet little effect was produced on the nation by these strong testimonies. A few sincere inquirers rejoiced that they had found the Messias, He of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write:³ but, in general, men received not the witness of John.

Soon after John’s proclamation, Jesus entered on his public ministry; and we may well inquire whether there was any thing in his life, doctrine, or character, which disagreed with the predictions of the ancient prophets concerning Messiah. On the contrary, there was the most exact transcript of every line; both by word and deed, Jesus proved himself to be truly the Lord’s Anointed, the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King of Israel. But did he then keep his pretensions so secret, that none but his immediate followers could judge of them? It is true he did not at all times, nor generally, proclaim his high sovereignty; for it was written, ‘He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in

¹ John iii. 29-36.

² Mat. iii. 16, 17.

³ John i. 40-45.

the street.' But to many humble individuals, he declared, in plain terms, that he was the Messiah;¹ and, in his public discourses, and public acts, he fulfilled all things predicted of Messiah, and displayed his Prophetical, Sacerdotal, and Royal authority ; at the same time, appealing to the people, if these were not the characteristics of Messiah, and if they did not see the completion of them in himself. One instance of this occurred in the Synagogue of Nazareth.² Another remarkable one was the answer given by Jesus to the messengers of the Baptist, who came to ask, ' Art thou He that should come ? Or look we for another ?' After performing, before their eyes, miracles which were known to belong to Messiah alone, he sent them away to tell John what they had seen and heard ; ' how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.'³

The heavenly wisdom and grace with which Jesus spake, were sufficient to convince any but the wilfully hardened, that he was the Prophet of whom it was written, ' Grace is poured into thy lips ; thy God hath *anointed* thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.'⁴ That he came to be the suffering and prevailing Priest, was equally evidenced by the continual reference he made to his death upon the cross, as an atonement⁵ for man ; and, although he refused an earthly throne, he claimed the title of Zion's King, in his entry into Jerusalem.⁶ His Divine nature also, Jesus frequently declared ; and, in his question to the Pharisees, How Christ could be David's *Son*, and yet David's *Lord*,⁷ he led them to the issue deducible from their own prophets, that

¹ John iv. 26 ; ix. 37.

² Luke iv. 16-21.

³ Luke vii. 19-23.

⁴ Ps. xlv. 2.

⁵ Mat. xx. 28

⁶ Mat. xxi. 1-9.

⁷ Mat. xxii. 41-46.

Christ must be both Divine and Human, the Eternal Jehovah, and yet a mortal Man.

Since, then, Jesus Christ gave such unequivocal testimony to the truth of his mission, why did the Jews not receive him? The primary cause of their unbelief, we must trace to the judicial blindness and hardness to which God had given them up; according to the Scripture, ‘ By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive.’ But the immediate causes were their erroneous views, already noticed, of Messiah’s kingdom, and the opposition of their corrupt hearts to his holy doctrines and precepts. They cared not for his Priestly office, because they felt not their deep need of his Atonement. They hated his Prophetic character, because it exposed their wickedness; and they only desired his Kingly dominion to free them from the Roman yoke, and lead them to conquest over the Gentiles. Therefore, though the multitude at times expressed admiration of the words and works of Jesus, and conviction that he was, or might be, the Christ, they were so much disgusted at his refusing an earthly kingdom, that their rulers, with little difficulty, gained their consent to his destruction. The blessed Jesus had indeed a little band of faithful followers, who believed in him as ‘ the Christ, the Saviour of the world;’ but they were few in number, and chiefly of the lower and less influential class of society; their views of the nature of his kingdom were indistinct, and their courage weak; in every respect they were unable to protect their Master. But he needed not protection: defence was not his object; his kingdom was not of this world, otherwise his servants would have fought, that he should not be delivered into the hands of his enemies. But how then would the Scriptures have been fulfilled? It was neither

the malice of his enemies, nor the weakness of his friends, that accomplished the death of Messiah, but the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and his own voluntary act, for which he came into the world. His duty on earth, as Prophet, was nearly at an end ; the great sacrifice of his Priesthood approached; and this was to introduce his glorious reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords.

During his trial, Jesus acknowledged his claims to the Messiahship more openly than he had previously done. When the high priest asked him, ‘ Art thou the *Christ*, the Son of the Blessed?’ he answered ‘ *I am*:’¹ following up the assertion by declaring that he would come again, in the clouds of heaven, and sit on the right hand of power. This was understood so clearly as a claim to Heavenly Majesty, that the high priest rent his clothes, and said, ‘ What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard his *blasphemy*. What think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.’ The Jews, however, had not power to inflict death on a criminal; and, to ensure his condemnation by the Roman governor, it was necessary to charge him with some crime that would render him obnoxious to the Romans. *They* cared not for his blasphemy; therefore the Jews made his *Regal* pretensions the plea for his condemnation; and, when Pilate would have released him, they cried with a loud voice, ‘ If thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar’s friend; whosoever *maketh himself a king*, speaketh against Cesar.’² Thus the infatuated Jews proclaimed to all the world, that they were fully aware of the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah, by making those very claims the grounds of their accusation; and so left themselves without excuse. Indeed, they published their

¹ Mark. xiv. 61–64.

² John xix. 12.

own guilt still more fully, by making each of his three great offices the subject of profane derision. His Prophetical office they derided, by blindfolding him, and striking him on the face, saying, ‘*Prophesy unto us, thou Christ; who is he that smote thee?*’¹ The great Atonement which, as Priest, he was offering in deepest anguish, was also the subject of their cruel scorn. ‘*He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.*’² A crown of thorns, a purple robe, and a reed for a sceptre, mocked his claims to Royalty;³ and, when hanging on the cross, he was still taunted with, ‘*If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself.*’⁴

Thus was *Messiah cut off, but not for himself;*⁵ and the people of the prince that should come, destroyed the city and the sanctuary. The crime whereby the Jewish rulers sought to conciliate the Roman power, was the very crime for which the Romans were commissioned by God to destroy them. They feared that if they allowed Jesus to be confessed as the Christ, the Romans would come, and take away both their place and nation.⁶ And, because they rejected and slew the Lord’s Christ, the Romans did come, and took away both their place and nation. And, alas! their posterity still refuse to own the Messiah come. They vainly ‘look for another,’ and continue to this day a standing monument of the vengeance of the Almighty, yet preserved to be a monument of the faithfulness of the Almighty too, when they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn;⁷ when they shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.⁸

¹ Mat. xxvi. 68.

² Luke xxiii. 35.

³ Mat. xxvii. 29.

⁴ Luke xxiii. 37.

⁵ Dan. ix. 25-27.

⁶ John xi. 43.

⁷ Zech. xii. 10.

⁸ Hos. iii. 5.

The death of Jesus put an end to the hopes his disciples had entertained of his being the Christ; for, in the conversation they had with him, after his resurrection, they said, ‘We *trusted that it had been* he which should have redeemed Israel.’¹ And so dark were their views respecting the nature of his reign as Messiah, that, at the moment when he was about to enter into glory, they asked, ‘Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?’²

But what a change took place in the views and conduct of these disciples, when *they were anointed* with the Holy Ghost! The scales fell from their eyes; all timidity left their bosoms. They were enlightened to perceive, and emboldened to declare, the fulfilment of prophecy concerning Messiah, in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, and in the astonishing gifts bestowed on themselves. They boldly charged their countrymen with the guilt of slaying *the Lord’s Anointed*; yet exhorted them to believe in him for the remission of their sins; to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which he was exalted to bestow; and to submit to him, as made of God, both *Lord* and *Christ*.³ When persecuted for their faithful testimony, they traced the fulfilment of prophecy in that ‘the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast *anointed*, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together.’⁴

Neither opposition nor danger could silence those faithful witnesses: ‘daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.’ The great subject of all their discourses was, that *Jesus*

¹ Luke xxiv. 21. ² Acts i. 6. ³ Acts ii. 14-40. ⁴ Acts iv. 25-28.

was *Christ*,—the very Messiah promised by God, and expected by the fathers,—the only Deliverer from sin and all its effects, in whom alone Jew or Gentile could be saved.

When we turn to the writings of the apostles, we find that to *preach Christ* is still their single object. He is the grand Theme, from whence all minor ones emanate ; for whatever else they treat of, flows from, and leads to, him. They preach him, as ‘ the Brightness of the Father’s glory, and the Express Image of his Person ; as ‘ the Head of principalities and powers, the Glory of all ‘ worlds, and the resplendent Luminary of the universe ; ‘ the inexhaustible Fountain of all the treasures of nature, grace, and glory ; and the matchless, incomparable Redeemer of all that come to him.’¹

Having now endeavoured to illustrate the name *Christ*, let us consider, for a little, what is implied in the name *Christian*. Surely it can mean nothing less, than *one united to Christ*, one who is *Christ’s property*, who *follows Christ*, as his Leader and Guide, and *obeys* him as his Master. It is customary for men to call themselves after the name of the founder of their sect or party, in politics, in philosophy, or in religion ; and many have been the renowned leaders, whose names have been venerated, whose steps followed, and their very vices copied, by admiring multitudes. But alas ! how mortifying is it to compare, in these respects, the professed followers of Christ, with the professed followers of Mohammed, and many other false teachers. It would really seem as if men shrink from avowing the religion they profess, in proportion as it resembles true religion.

Let us visit a *heathen* land, and we are left in no doubt as to the nature of its worship, or the qualifications

¹ Cruden.

deemed essential to salvation. We are affected by witnessing the extraordinary patience and fortitude with which the poor votaries of a false faith endure tortures, the most lingering or violent ; the eagerness with which they rush on bodily destruction, in hope of saving their spirits ; and the resolution wherewith they sacrifice all the joys of life, at the call of a mistaken duty.

Then let us go to a *Mohammedan* country. See, at the voice of the Muezzin, every head is prostrate on the ground ; all, of every rank and condition, absorbed in, at least, the semblance of devotion. However they may be engaged, whether in traffic, in conversation, or in indolent repose, all instantly obey the summons from the minaret, and half an hour is devoted to prayer. Then listen to their common discourse, to the salutations of courtesy, to the transaction of business, in short, to the general tone of society ; and you hear a constant acknowledgment of God, and of that Mediator, through whom they vainly worship him.

But, to advance many steps in the scale, let us next visit a *Popish* land. Let us look at those who indeed worship God in Christ ; but join, with his true Mediætion, that of creature-mediators ; with his pure and simple doctrines, the traditions of men ; with his holy precepts, self-imposed austerities, and vain pompous ceremonies. And here too we find an open, nay, an obtrusive avowal of the religion of the country. None are ashamed of their devotions, though in presence of those who they know despise them. Nor is it in public alone that they are religious. Their punctuality in secret exercises, their self-denial, and obedience to every thing pronounced necessary by their Church, may well excite our admiration.

Lastly, let us come to a *Protestant* realm, yea, to our

own beloved, though guilty land ; and, if we could take the survey of a stranger, should we not be inclined to think that the Founder of the Christian religion had laid down no fixed rules, either for faith or practice ; but that to be a *Christian*, one has only to believe and to do whatever pleases one's self ? O the immense latitude given to this name, in our modern *charitable* phraseology ! A man may deny the divinity of our adorable Lord ; yet call himself a *Christian*. His spirit, temper, and conduct may be in direct opposition to those of Christ ; and yet we must acknowledge him a *Christian*. What is there in the ordinary routine of society among us, to remind a stranger of the religion we profess ? Nothing but a few conventional forms, which are quite detached from the general tenor of our lives.

It may indeed be argued, in defence of Protestants, that it is the very essence of their religion, to substitute inward principles and affections for outward show. But has Christ our Leader ever dispensed with outward tokens of subjection and love to himself ? Did he not, rather, require us to confess him before men, and denounce woes on them that refuse to do so ? Did he not prescribe such rules of conduct, as cannot be obeyed without the observation of others ; such as love to the brethren, active charity, such a separation from the world as must expose us to the world's hatred and scorn, self-denial, meekness, peaceableness, and, above all, godliness ? Did he not positively command us to let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father in heaven ? After all this, shall it be thought a feature of true piety, to keep our religion as carefully concealed, as if Christ had commanded us to hide it under a bushel ; to live as nearly like the world as possible ; to avoid every act, word, or

deed, that could offend the world, or remind it of His sovereign authority and constraining love? But do the advocates of an exclusively secret piety, make up in secret devotion for their deficiency in public acknowledgement of Christ? This must of course rest with their own conscience; but let them remember *Who* has said, ‘Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’ And if they hate hypocrisy, let them reflect whether to call themselves *Christians*, and yet not to do the things that Christ says, is not the worst hypocrisy.

Nominal Christianity is the strangest anomaly in the world. Professing to spring from belief in, and attachment to, a Divine Founder, it leaves its votaries to follow that Founder, or not, just as they choose. A small minority, it is true, confess their adherence to him, delight in naming his Name, and make it the great business of their lives, to advance his cause, and gain converts to him. But these are thought unnecessarily strict, righteous over-much, by the rest of the body; just because they *do* what the whole body *professes to do*. And even *they* must confess that they show culpable timidity in displaying the banner God has given them, and culpable negligence in promoting the glory of their Divine Master.

O how unlike are we all to the early followers of Christ! The name *Christian* bore a different significance, when ‘the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.’ It then denoted, one who was determined to obey and follow Christ at all hazards, to spread abroad a sweet savour of his Name, and advance his cause, at the cost of life itself; to spurn the riches of this world, except as means of doing good; to obey God rather than men, and to rejoice in suffering shame for the Name of Christ.

Those primitive followers of the Lamb have left on record various tests, whereby we would do well to try

our own Christianity. ‘If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature*.’ ‘Let every one that nameth the name of Christ *depart from iniquity*.’ ‘He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also *so to walk, even as he walked*.’ ‘They that are Christ’s, have *crucified the flesh*, with the affections and lusts.’ All these things they are enabled to do, because they are anointed with a portion of the same unction wherewith their Lord is anointed. ‘If any man have not the *Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his.’ But having that Spirit, the believer is *anointed*, in a subordinate sense, to the same offices to which Christ is anointed. He is a *prophet*, preaching by his life and conversation ; a *priest*, to offer sacrifices of prayer and praise, the offering of a contrite heart, the willing sacrifice of body and soul ; a *king*, by true nobility, and victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. In short, Christians are ‘a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.’ And hereafter, in a more glorious sense, they shall be made, of Christ, ‘*kings and priests unto God, and his Father*. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.’

ESSAY XXI.

PROPHET.

WE have seen in the last Essay, that our blessed Mediator was anointed of God to the united offices of PROPHET, PRIEST, and KING ; and that he avowed and exercised all those offices during his earthly sojourn as the Man Christ Jesus.

We are now to study more minutely each of these great offices, beginning with that of PROPHET.

The prediction of a Prophet *like unto Moses*, whom God would raise up unto Israel, had its most comprehensive fulfilment, as has been already remarked, in the resemblance that Christ bore to Moses in the office of *Mediator* between God and men. But in its more literal sense, the term Prophet denotes one who is inspired by God to foretel future events, and make known his character and will to men ; or, as explained by St Paul, ‘ one who speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.’¹

The goings forth of the great Prophet have been of old ; for, in all ages, and under all dispensations, the will, character, and purposes of the Father have been declared by the only begotten Son.² This he has done in *three* different ways, during *three* distinct periods of time.

First, *Before his Incarnation*, by appointing types and shadows, and chiefly by his Inspiration of human prophets.

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 3.

² John i. 18.

Secondly, *During his Incarnation*, by his Personal teaching.

Thirdly, *Since his Exaltation*, by his Word and ministers ; each of these ministrations being rendered effectual by his Spirit, without whose influence even his Personal teaching could not avail.

It shall be the object of this Essay to illustrate the work of our Divine PROPHET during each of these periods or manifestations.

FIRST PERIOD.—First, Let us consider his work in the Inspiration of the prophets, viewing them, at the same time, as types of Him.

That it was He who inspired the old prophets, we learn from the following words of St Peter, ‘ Searching what, or what manner of time, *the Spirit of Christ* which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.’¹

From the same apostle we learn, that *Christ, by his Spirit*, ‘ *went and preached to the spirits in prison*’² to the sinners before the flood (now in the prison of hell), ‘ which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.’ This agrees with what we have had occasion in former Essays to observe, that all revelations or manifestations made to patriarchs or prophets of old, and through them to the rest of mankind, came through the medium of God the Son, in anticipation of his Mediatorial work, or rather in the early exercise of that work.³

Let us now take a rapid sketch of the most renowned of the prophets, viewing them, not only as *inspired by*

¹ 1 Pet. i. 11.

² 1 Pet. iii. 18-20.

³ See ‘ Angel-Jehovah,’ ‘ Word,’ &c.

Christ, but also as *types of him*, resembling him in *character*, in the *things taught* by them, and in the *reception* they met with from mankind. Almost all the prominent characters of early Scripture History were prophets. Enoch and Noah before the flood ; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, after that event ; Moses, occupying an elevated rank among his brethren, being ever ready to receive the revelation of the Most High ; and besides uttering many wonderful predictions, some of which are even now accomplishing, being the instrument in God's hand to make known the Moral Law, and to found the Ceremonial Law, which latter, so long as it remained in force, was an open book to reveal the mysteries of the Gospel.

From the time of Moses to that of Samuel, few prophets appeared : ‘the word of the Lord was precious in those days ; there was no open vision.’¹ But from that period, till within four hundred years of the birth of Messiah, the Lord raised up a succession of inspired prophets, both to witness for Him to their own generation, and to record his promises of mercy through a Redeemer to generations to come. Those prophets resembled Christ in *character*. The excellencies which he himself possessed in infinite fulness and perfection, he divided to them severally, as he would. Some of them resembled him most in certain features, some in others ; but in general, they resembled him in ardent zeal for the glory of God, and single devotedness to his service ; in deadness to the world, with all its vanities and pomps ; in fearlessly delivering God's messages, however severe ; in hatred to the sins of men, while yet they loved the souls of men ; and in patient endurance of all the ridicule, scorn, and cruelty, to which their faithfulness exposed them.

¹ 1 Sam. iii. 1.

The things taught by the prophets were the same in substance as those taught by Christ himself. They declared the character and attributes of God, and the relation in which man stands towards him as his guilty creature ; they declared his abhorrence of all sin, especially the sin of idolatry, and called upon men to repent, and return to their offended Maker, promising pardon and acceptance to all who should obey the call, and denouncing the most terrible judgments upon all who should reject it. The Way in which pardon and acceptance were to be sought, through a Divine Redeemer, those ancient prophets saw with various degrees of clearness. They ‘*desired to see* those things which we see,’ and ‘*searched diligently*’ the import of their own predictions.¹ Their messages, also, differed much one from another. Jeremiah and Ezekiel had heavy tidings to deliver, and an occasional flash of Gospel light alone breaks the darkness of their visions. Daniel, Hosea, Micah, and Zechariah, were employed to utter many bright and cheering promises of Messiah’s reign ; while Isaiah and David exhibit, with such unclouded lustre, the glories of that reign, that we can scarcely believe ‘the Sun of Righteousness’ had not already risen when they wrote.

To confirm the testimony of his servants the prophets, God was pleased to bestow on some of them miraculous powers ; and those gifted in this manner, have generally left no written prophecies. The miracles performed by Elijah and Elisha eminently resembled those of our Lord himself. They were both empowered to raise the dead. One of them fed a multitude, and cleansed a leper ; the other was supported to endure a fast of forty days and nights, and ascended to heaven in the body. Jonah, also, whose character bore the least resemblance to Christ

¹ Mat. xiii. 17 ; 1 Pet. i. 10.

of any prophet recorded in Scripture, and who delivered no express prediction of Gospel times, was made, in his short but eventful history, an astonishing type of the Saviour, in his death, burial, and resurrection.

The light vouchsafed to the Israelites regarding the Way in which Mercy was to be sought, was indeed faint and obscure, compared with what we are privileged to see. Yet so full were the instructions sent to them by the prophets, and so adequate to the purposes of that dispensation, that the Lord challenges them, at different times, to say *what more he could have done* to his vineyard that he had not done ; and asks, ‘ Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes ?’¹

But, alas ! what a picture of human perverseness and obstinacy, of human blindness and aversion to the things of God, is presented in the *reception given* to those faithful monitors. They herein typified the great Prophet who was to come, that they were persecuted, reviled, tormented, by those whose salvation they sought. Of this we find sad proofs in every book of the Old Testament ; and towards its close, we read such melancholy summaries as the following : ‘ They were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and *slew thy prophets*, which testified against them to turn them to thee ; and they wrought great provocations.’—‘ Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets ; yet they would not give ear.’² Again we read, ‘ The Lord God of their fathers sent to them, by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending ; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place : but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised

¹ Is. v. 3, 4.

² Neh. ix. 26–30.

his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.¹

So general had been the persecution endured by those holy messengers, that Stephen appealed to his countrymen, to say, which of the prophets their fathers had *not* persecuted ? declaring, that they had slain them who showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom they themselves had been the betrayers and murderers.² And our blessed Prophet himself told the Jews, that in persecuting him, they proved themselves the true children of them which killed the prophets.³

The Prophetical era closed about four hundred years before the birth of Christ, with Malachi's grand predictions, that the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS should arise with healing in his wings ; that the Lord should suddenly *come to his temple*, even the MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT, preceded by his herald ; and, finally, that *Elijah the prophet* should be sent before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD.⁴

After this long pause, the Spirit of Prophecy again spake by the mouth of Zacharias and Elizabeth, of Mary and of Simeon, and most remarkably by the mouth of John the Baptist, who plainly declared himself the herald of Messiah, predicted by Malachi and Isaiah, and who was pronounced by Jesus himself, ‘ more than a prophet,’ even that very ‘ Elias which was for to come.’ John, indeed, was highly honoured. For, whereas his predecessors, the ancient prophets, saw through dim perspective the coming of Messiah, his anointing with the Spirit, and the glory of the latter house ; John proclaimed him as actually *come*, saw with his own eyes the de-

¹ 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. ² Acts vii. 52. ³ Mat. xxiii. 29-36.

⁴ Mal. iii. 1 ; iv. 2-5.

scent of the Holy Ghost upon him, and beheld the Temple glorified by his personal presence. In *character*, and *reception*, as well as in *doctrine*, John resembled his brethren, the old prophets, and his Lord, the true Prophet of the Church. The husbandmen, true to their old character, misused and rejected this messenger also, and gave him no fruits of the vineyard.

SECOND PERIOD.—Last of all, the great Householder sent unto them his Son. ‘God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.’¹ Here let us devoutly pause, and reflect what a Prophet was this! How infinitely glorious in his Person and attributes; how perfectly qualified for the office assigned him! For this was *He* ‘by whom God made the worlds,’ and ‘who upholdeth all things by the word of his power;’ He who is the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express Image of his Person; whom the Father himself addresses thus, ‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.’ This Prophet possessed every perfection of Deity; Omnipotence, to search the hearts of his hearers, and discover what instructions they individually needed; Omnipotence, to bring home the lessons he taught, to give faith to believe, and will to obey them. The wisest and most zealous human teacher can neither enlighten the understanding, nor impress the heart of his disciples; but here was a Teacher who could effectually do both.

Along with the perfections of Deity, this glorious Prophet combined in his Person the perfections of Humanity: he was perfect Man, that he might bring down his heavenly lessons to the level of our earthly

¹ Heb. i. 1, 2.

capaeities, draw instruction from the every-day customs and occurrences of human life, encourage sinners to sit at his feet and hear his words, sympathize with them in all the difficulties of their path to heaven, and teach them, by example, as well as by preept, their duty to God and to each other.

Besides his fitness, as God and Man, to be the Prophet of the Church, Jesus was qualified for the office, by the rich anointing of the Holy Ghost, given to him without measurc, and in every possible variety of influence. Some of these influences are enumerated by the prophet, ‘The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, *the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord;* and shall make him of *quick understanding* in the fear of the Lord.’¹

Having now shortly considered the wonderful qualifications possessed by Jesus Christ, for the office of Prophet, let us, with all humility and reverence, looking to himself for light and direction, proeceed to study his *character* as a Teacher ; the *doctrines and precepts* taught by him, with their miraculous seals; and the *reception* given to him by the world. The first point that attracts our notice, in the character of the great Teacher, is his indefatigable *perseverance*. During the three years of his public Ministry, he never intermittenid his laborious duties, scarcely long enough to satisfy the demands of his human nature. He secms to have officiated regularly in the synagogues, not as a priest, but as an authorised Teacher : for it is said, that at Nazareth, ‘he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and stood up for to read, as his eustom was :’² and his teaching on the Sabbath-days is frequently alluded to as a customary thing.³ In pur-

¹ Is. xi. 2, 3.

² Luke iv. 16.

³ Luke vi. 6.

suing his appointed course, Jesus was neither deterred by persecution, nor persuaded by solicitation, to deviate from the path of duty. When driven from one city, he went and taught in another; but no entreaties could induce him to remain longer than the appointed season. When the people of Capernaum sought to stay him, he replied, ‘I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent.’¹ ‘And he preached in their synagogues, throughout all Galilee.’² This was in the early part of his Ministry: but his diligence continued unabated throughout: ‘It came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.’ But his ministrations were far from being confined to regular times and places. Not only on the Sabbath-days, and in the synagogues; but in the hour of social intercourse, in the friendly walk by the way side or through the corn field, in the house of a Pharisee or of a publican, in the thronged city or on the mountain, at the ‘receipt of custom’ or in the fishing-boat, he was still the Prophet. He neglected no opportunity of speaking a word in season, but improved every passing incident, every remark or question, to impress upon his hearers some heavenly doctrine or practical lesson. His personal convenience or desire for retirement never interfered with his Prophetic duties: whenever the people were willing to listen he was ready to teach, whether in season or out of season.

Every other grace adorned the character of our divine Prophet; and each shone the more brightly, from union to graces apparently opposite, which, in mere human teachers, are seldom found combined in large proportions. His Wisdom was the more admirable for its union with

¹ Luke iv. 42, 43.

² Mark i. 39.

Simplicity, and Condescension to the ignorant. He who possessed all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, who could, at one glance, scan the whole universe, who directed all the secret springs of nature, of providence, and of grace, did nevertheless stoop to teach poor ignorant children of men, in the simplest words that language could afford ; adapting his instructions to each particular class of hearers, drawing the most valuable lessons from the objects of nature, from the feelings of natural affection, and from the dealings of men with one another.

The union of Zeal and Meekness was also very conspicuous in the character of Jesus. His zeal for the honour of God was so vehement, that he could truly say, ‘ The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.’ No prophet was ever so severe and cutting in reproof, so keen in detecting hypocrisy, nor so bold in exposing it ; yet no prophet could ever be compared to him in meekness of teaching.

How astonishing was his Patience, in answering the questions of ignorant, but humble inquirers ! How wonderful his Forbearance with their unbelief, stupidity, and carnal apprehensions ! Indeed, he held out this as an encouragement to sinners to come and learn of him, that he was ‘ meek and lowly in heart.’ He truly did not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax ; for, although his hatred of sin was such as no mere human teacher can conceive, he yet did not spurn from his holy presence the vilest sinners, but invited them to approach him, with the blessed assurance, that he came, ‘ not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’

Another beautiful contrast, in the character of Jesus as a Prophet, was the union of Boldness in magnifying his *office*, with Patience in enduring all *personal* insults and injuries. He continually warned his hearers of the

deep responsibility they incurred by hearing his words ; that the advantages enjoyed by former generations, in the preaching of Jonas, or in the wisdom of Solomon, were infinitely surpassed by those they were enjoying ; and that their condemnation, if they repented not, must be proportionably dreadful. He told them explicitly, that if they rejected him, and received not his words, they must, by these words, be judged in the last day. But, with all this boldness in delivering his message, the blessed Jesus was patient as a lamb, where his own feelings alone were concerned. He reviled not, when called a blasphemer, a madman, an agent of Beelzebub. He took no vengeance on those who rejected himself and his message. When little children mocked Elisha, he was inspired to curse them in the name of the Lord, and wild beasts were sent to devour them. When impious men came to take Elijah, fire came down from heaven and destroyed them ; and the apostles of Christ wished him to take like vengeance on his enemies ; ‘ but he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.’¹

The *things taught* by Jesus, while they were the same in substance as those taught by the ancient prophets, infinitely excelled them in clearness, in simplicity, in fulness, and in authority, besides containing many truths till then but partially revealed. Jesus came, not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil. All the leading doctrines and duties of Christianity are to be traced in the Old Dispensation ; and believers found them there before the preaching of Christ. But what had there been obscurely shadowed forth, he brought to light by the Gospel. And whereas the Book of heavenly Wisdom

¹ Luke ix. 54, 55.

had been, till then, accessible almost exclusively to one nation, Christ opened it to the whole world, abolished the distinction between Jews and Gentiles in religious privileges, and introduced a more simple and spiritual worship. All the *doctrines* he preached, related to the salvation he came to accomplish, ‘Because he could testify of no greater, he testified of himself :’ yet in such a manner as ever to magnify and uphold the glory of the Father, whose Servant and Prophet he acknowledged himself to be. The great fundamental truths which he taught were the following :—the co-equality and co-eternity of the Three Persons of the Trinity, and their united design and operation in the scheme of man’s Redemption ; the entire corruption and helplessness of man ; the only way of salvation through his own death, resurrection, and intercession ; the necessity for the Spirit’s work, to give new life to man, and preserve it, when given ; the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body ; and many precious assurances of the union of believers with himself as their Mediator, and with each other. All these great truths had, it is true, been already taught by the prophets, and prefigured by the Levitical rites, and by many typical characters and institutions ; but, in estimating the degree of light vouchsafed to the Jewish Church, compared with that enjoyed by the Christian, we must remember that we have, not only the New Testament revelation, in addition to the Old, but the mutually reflected light of each upon the other.

The principal *predictions* delivered by the great Prophet, related to his own sufferings and death, his resurrection, exaltation, and second coming ; to the persecution and martyrdom of his disciples ; to the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, and their consequent success in establishing the Christian Church, against all opposition ;

to the destruction of Jerusalem, the calling of the Gentiles, the universal promulgation of the Gospel, and the awful solemnities of the Judgment Day, with its everlasting results of misery, and of bliss.

The *precepts* taught by our Lord are too numerous to be inserted here. They were not literally new, any more than his doctrines ; but they were enforced by new motives, drawn from his own unfathomable love, and unsullied example ; they were spiritualised, expanded, and adapted to universal practice, instead of to the use of one nation. They consisted chiefly in illustrations of the two great commandments, Love to God, and Love to our neighbour, and of rules for personal purity and spiritual mindedness. It was one of the characteristic features in Messiah's anointing, that he should be ‘of quick understanding (or, as in the margin, ‘*of quick scent*’) in the fear of the Lord.’¹ And this was fully verified in the moral and religious teaching of our great Prophet, by the inward, searching, and spiritual nature of his lessons. Did he treat of the Worship of God ? He declared, it must be ‘in spirit and in truth.’ Did he treat of the Love of God ? It must be with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. Did he urge the duty of forgiveness ? It must be ‘from the heart.’ Of alms-giving ? It must proceed, not from ostentation, but from love to God ; and be kept secret, as it were, from the giver himself : while, at the same time, he inculcated the duty of letting our light shine before men to the glory of our Father in heaven. Instead of the ceremonial purifications of the ancient ritual, Jesus enjoined that inward purity which they represented ; requiring constant vigilance against temptation, in thought, word, and deed ; constant self-denial, indifference to the things of the body,

¹ Is. xi. 3.

compared with the things of the soul ; to the concerns of time, compared with those of eternity. He taught the true nature of happiness, so different from that which is esteemed happiness by the world, and enjoined men to lay up treasures in heaven, rather than on earth. He taught the necessity of watching against the first evil thought, if we would avoid the evil action ; if we would be guiltless of murder, we must not be angry without a cause ; if we would keep clear of revenge, we must be willing to endure, without resistance, unmerited evil. The commandment, to ‘ love one another,’ was not literally ‘ a new commandment ;’ for the law of Moses taught, ‘ Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,’ and it forbade the ‘ wicked thought’ of oppression, as well as the wicked deed. But the Jews had rendered the commandments of God of none effect, by their traditions; a specimen of which was, their limiting the duty of love, to love of their own countrymen ; and joining to the command, ‘ Thou shalt love thy neighbour,’ the clause, ‘ and hate thine enemy.’ The blessed Jesus, on the contrary, enjoined love, goodwill, and kindness to enemies, and prayer for persecutors : and his command to his disciples to love one another was so far *new*, that it was addressed to a new association, formed not from affinity of kindred, or of country, but from mutual love and gratitude to himself, and mutual interest in the great salvation.

We must now close our unworthy remarks, on the words of Him, who spake ‘ as never man spake.’ It is difficult to enlarge upon a theme, at once so sacred, and so familiar to every reader of the Bible; and we would much rather sit in meek silence at the feet of Jesus and hear his words, than comment upon them. A single eye, and a willing mind, with the teaching of the Holy Ghost, are the only expositors required for understanding them.

We hasten now to consider the miraculous testimonials of his office displayed by our great Prophet. They were all emblematical of the message of mercy he came to deliver. Elisha inflicted blindness on the men of the king of Syria ; he also made the leprosy of Naaman cleave to the liar Gehazi. But with the two exceptions of cursing an inanimate object (the fig tree), and permitting the entrance of the devils into the herd of swine, the miracles of Jesus were all of a healing, restoring, and vivifying nature ; emblems of his operations on diseased, enslaved, and dead souls.

We are now to consider the *reception* given to the divine Prophet ; and it will be found corresponding to that given to his servants, the ancient prophets.

His Ministry, indeed, attracted astonishment and admiration. The miracles accompanying it, and the authority with which he spake, convinced the multitude, at times, that he was ‘that Prophet which should come into the world,’ either Messiah himself, the Prophet like unto Moses, or one of the old prophets, whom they expected to rise again to bear witness of him. The beginning of St Mark’s Gospel is particularly explicit, as to the reputation acquired by Jesus, and the popularity he enjoyed, during the earlier part of his Ministry. We read, ‘that there went a fame of him throughout all the region round about ;’ that ‘he was glorified of all ;’ that ‘they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this ? What new doctrine is this ? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.’ At Capernaum, in particular, his doctrines and miracles attracted overwhelming crowds. At one time, it is said, ‘The whole city was gathered together at the door.’ And when, rising up early, he withdrew

for secret prayer into a solitary place, his disciples followed him, with the intimation, ‘ All men seek for thee.’ So great was the excitement produced, that ‘ Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and (even there) they came to him from every quarter.’

Yet, what was the doom pronounced by Christ upon this seemingly pious Capernaum? That it should be more tolerable, in the day of judgment, for Sodom than for her! He knew well that they sought him, not for spiritual enlightening and comfort, but for the worldly advantages they hoped to gain by his means, and that, being disappointed of these, they would join their countrymen in betraying and condemning him. And this may serve as a specimen of the reception given to Jesus by the nation at large. When they discovered that it was *only* the salvation of their immortal souls he came to accomplish; that it was *only* the dominion of sin and Satan, he came to free them from, they cared not for him. Neither his Prophetical, nor his Priestly offices were valued by them, except inasmuch as they testified his Kingly office. Therefore, when he refused to be made an earthly king, they were ready to join their priests and rulers, who, exasperated by his faithful rebukes, thirsted for his blood, in crying, ‘ Away with him, away with him, crucify him.’ The husbandmen, as predicted by the Son himself, ‘ caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.’ And thus, the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, was required of that generation.

THIRD PERIOD.—We come now to the *Third* great period of Christ’s manifestation, as Prophet of the Church; that which succeeded his exaltation. His death upon

the cross caused but a short interruption to the exercise of his Prophetic work ; and made way for its much greater efficacy and wider extension. He had told his apostles, before his death, that it was expedient for them that he should go away ; for that the Comforter, whom he would send to them from the Father, would teach them all things ; many things which they were not able then to bear. Before his ascension, he greatly opened their understandings in the things concerning himself. But after he was seated at the right hand of God, in full Mediatorial authority, Jesus sent down the Holy Ghost, in such abundant measure, as eclipsed all preceding manifestations. Not only were the apostles and former disciples made the subjects of a wonderful change. Thousands of those who consented to the condemnation of Jesus now believed in him as the only Saviour : many of the priests, even, were obedient to the faith. According to the testimony of enemies, the apostles ‘ filled Jerusalem with their doctrine.’ The Christian Church was established, by means of weak earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be manifestly that of the Divine Prophet.

But this blessed and adorable Prophet had on his heart the salvation of generations yet to come ; of people of every kindred and clime, to the end of the world. For their benefit, and for the glory of God, he inspired Evangelists, to record distinct histories of his birth, life, doctrine, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension ; and of the marvellous events that followed his exaltation. Nor was this all. He further inspired his apostles, adding to their number a chosen vessel, who laboured more abundantly than they all, to write Epistles to the infant Churches. These Epistles contain, besides particular instructions adapted to the circumstances of each Church, many re-

markable prophecies, an inexhaustible fund of practical instruction for the Church in all ages, and a more full and regular system of doctrine than Christ had personally given. Thus were his words to the apostles fulfilled : ' I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth.'¹

In addition to the Apostolic Epistles, the Lord Jesus was pleased to make to his beloved John a further Revelation of his glorified state, and Mediatorial dignity, of the future vicissitudes of the Church, of her victory over all opposing powers, and her final and glorious union with himself to all eternity.

We may confidently assert, that these books of the New Testament contain the ' all things' that Jesus promised to teach his disciples by the Holy Ghost : and that whosoever pretends to new revelations, becomes liable to the awful woes denounced in the last chapter of it. By the gracious providence of God, the blessed Volume of Inspiration has been preserved uncorrupted and entire, during many ages of darkness and of violence, and has been translated into almost every tongue, and carried into almost every part of the world,

By way of practical improvement of this subject, we would inquire, *In what manner does the divine Prophet teach us, in these latter days?* and, *What reception do we give him?*

First, *How does Jesus teach men now?* We do not, indeed, hear the Word of truth from his own lips, nor from those of inspired Apostles ; nor do we behold miraculous evidences of its authenticity. But we hesitate not to affirm, that the want of these advantages is more

¹ John xvi. 12, 13.

than counterbalanced by the constant access we have to the written Word ; the many facilities afforded us of comparing one part with another, and viewing the perfect harmony that pervades the whole ; and by the accumulated evidence arising from still fulfilling Prophecy. The absence of miracles, in our own day, is amply compensated by the full evidence we possess of the truth of those recorded in former days. When we consider, also, the abundant means enjoyed in our favoured land, we cannot doubt but our responsibility exceeds that of Capernaum, as far as Capernaum's did that of Sodom. What fruits, then, do we render for these our many advantages ? *What reception are we giving to the heavenly Prophet ?* To outward appearance, we give him a kind welcome, at least a decent and respectful one. We erect palaces in honour of his Name ; we flock in thousands on the Sabbath to hear his Word preached ; we have highly ornamented copies of his written Word in our houses ; and the study of it forms a more prominent part of education than was the case in former years. We have many associations for the purpose of circulating the Word of Christ at home and abroad ; and any open disrespect to his Name, except by a sect thought privileged to deny his Divinity, is accounted a breach of the laws of society.

So far it is well. And we have unspeakable cause of gratitude, in the absence of persecution, and the protection from injury, which Religion enjoys, under a government of which Christianity forms part of the law of the land. But Jesus Christ looks for something more than decent respect from a people so favoured as we are. He looks for sound and clear knowledge, for intelligent love, and holy and consistent obedience. And, alas ! does he not see, instead of these, lamentable ignorance of the fundamental principles of his Gospel, even among

those who have leisure and opportunities of knowing them ; cold indifference, and wilful inconsistency, among those who do theoretically understand them ?

The *ignorance* which prevails in a large portion of professing Christians, can be imputed only to the blindness inflicted on them by ‘the god of this world.’¹ The Bible, in their hands, is to them a sealed book. The Gospel, read by them, is hid. Let a faithful minister stand up in a pulpit where, in general, Christ is not fully and faithfully preached. Let him bring forward Scriptural statements, even in the very words of Scripture, concerning the entire corruption of man’s heart ; the necessity of regeneration, and continual supplies of the Spirit ; the inability of man to contribute one iota to his own salvation, or to perform a single act acceptable to God, except through Christ, and by his Spirit ; especially if the preacher allude, in the most guarded way, to the secret decrees of the Almighty, and his promises to keep his own elect to the end ; what commotions are raised against these *dangerous* doctrines ! what a display of zeal for good works and human exertion in righteousness !

But, let the preacher next take up, the holiness required of all them who ‘name the name of Christ.’ Let him show, that although the Law cannot justify, it is yet binding on believers, as their perfect rule of duty, any deviation from which is sin. Let him dwell on the obligations by which Christians are bound to devote to God their whole time and substance, their best affections and influence ; to live above the world, as a peculiar people, set apart for God’s service, transformed into his likeness, ‘partakers of the Divine nature.’ Let the preacher enforce this train of conduct ; and, the same hearers, who were so violent against the *licentious tendency* of his doc-

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

trine, are equally violent against the *over strict practice* which he deduces from that doctrine. They say, It might be suitable for angels ; but for poor sinful man, it is impossible. Nay, they have no desire to see it realised ; it would banish all cheerfulness, cut off every innocent reereation, and make men hypocrites. Indeed, they insinuate, that those who pretend to such sanctity, are more likely to come short in the common duties of life, than their less ostentatious neighbours. Again, let the preacher dwell on the joys and privileges, or on the sorrows and conflicts, of experimental religion, as described by David, by Peter, or by Paul ; let him talk of the sweetness of fellowship with God, or the pain of losing it : he has few listeners that can enter into his feelings, most of them set him down as an enthusiast and a visionary.

Yet all these subjects he may have treated of, in exact accordance with the teaching of Christ, the true Prophet. Can there be a more melancholy spectacle in a nominally Christian city, than an assembly so generally ignorant of the doctrines, the duties, and the privileges of the Gospel ? Yes ; follow us to another worshipping assembly, and you will see a spectacle more melancholy still. Here, all the blessed truths of the Gospel of Jesus are fully and faithfully declared, Sabbath after Sabbath. The highest privileges are pressed on the acceptance of all ; the highest practice is strenuously urged upon all. The evil of sin is set forth, in all the power of language to express ; the necessity of turning from sin to God ; of true faith in the only Redeemer ; of vital union with, and conformity to him ; of the unction of the Holy Spirit ;—these, and all other great Christian truths are the constant themes of discourse. What melting views of the love of Christ ! What spirit-stirring questions for self-examina-

tion ! What a lofty standard of duty held up ! And the people listen, not only without impatience, but with approbation ; and, if the preacheher be highly gifted, with delight. Evangelieal doctrine is nothing new or strange to this people ; it has been instilled into their understanding and memory from childhood ; and they would be dissatisfied with any other. These are not the people who say to their prophets, ‘ Speak to us smooth things ; prophecy deeeits.’ They like to be told the truth, and the whole truth. They sit with calm eomplaceneey, under rebukes the most pointed and severe. No diseourse can be too searching, or too spiritual for them.

What, then, is melancholy here ? Surely this is not only a wise and understanding, but a believing and obedient people ! Is it possible that they belong to that class of hearers, deseribed by the Lord to his servant Ezekiel ; ‘ Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voiee, and can play well on an instrument : for they hear thy words, *but they do them not ?*’ Or to that elass described by Jesus himself, who shall hereafter vainly seek admittanee into his kingdom, saying, ‘ *We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets ?*’ Alas ! alas ! if you follow these people to their homes, to their avocations, to their amusements, you will be irresistibly forced to this conelusion, coneerning a large portion of them. You will find that to serve the Lord Christ is no part of their daily business, to eonfess him in their eonversation is no part of their plan of life ; that it is difficult to distinguish them from those who ‘ know not God.’ As the Psalmist said, of the wicked who forsook God’s law, we are ‘ horribly afraid,’ for these well-instructed, but most ineonsistent professors.

Among them, however, is a ‘little floek,’ who not only approve the word spoken, but open their hearts and consciences to its quickening, edifying, and healing power ; who are in truth taught and led by the Spirit of Christ ; and therefore bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. These not only delight in hearing Christ speak in public, but resort to him in secret, that he may explain and apply what he has spoken. And they find him still, as patient, as condescending, and as kind, as faithful, and discriminating, as he was when here below. As he stooped to converse with Nicodemus, with ‘the woman of Samaria,’ and other individual sinners, during his earthly sojourn ; as he warned each of his disciples of their besetting sin, reproved Peter for self-confidence, James and John for a vindictive spirit, Martha for over-carefulness ; so does he still admonish and reprove every one who comes to him ; so does he still open their understandings, that they may understand the Scriptures, remove all their doubts and difficulties, comfort and encourage them, under all trials, perplexities, and distresses. This little flock are ‘blessed ;’ the only happy people in the world ; for, amid much infirmity, and shortcoming, they do sincerely ‘hear the word of God, and keep it.’ Yet, must not they too confess, that they lose much of the benefit of their gracious Prophet’s teaching, by remissness in secret application to him ; by going for help more to his servants than to himself ; by neglecting his injunction, to ‘watch and pray always ;’ by remaining unbelief and self-will, earthliness and slothfulness ?

ESSAY XXII.

PRIEST.

THE three great offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, are often used to express the whole of those relations whieh Christ sustains to his people. Although these offices are all equally necessary, and inseparably linked together, the one now before us seems to claim the pre-eminence, as the Centre, Foundation, and Corner-Stone of the sinner's hope.

As Prophet, Christ had but revealed our inevitable misery and ruin ; as King, he had but executed the just vengeance of his broken law,—had he not also been our Priest, by his great saerifice to reeoneile us to God, and by his continual intercession to preserve us in the favour of God.

Although our blessed Lord could not enter on the full discharge of his Priestly office, till the period arrived for offering his great saerifice, it is certain that he virtually sustained it, from the first entrance of sin into the world ; otherwise there could have been no terms of amity preserved between the Holy Jehovah and his guilty creatures.

Like the office of Prophet, whieh we have just considered, this office of Priest was foreshown in Israel, by a long line of typieal predecessors ; but with this mate-

rial difference, that whereas the Hebrew prophets not only typified Christ, but were entrusted with part of his work, so that the words spoken by them were as truly the words of Christ, as those which fell from his own lips ; the Hebrew priests were merely types of our great High Priest, and could not contribute in the smallest degree to his Sacerdotal work. The ordinances which they administered, indeed, were real means of grace to the faithful, who looked through the outward sign to the thing signified. But Christ, as Priest, trod the wine-press alone : of the people there was none with him.¹

It will, however, aid our conceptions of the Priesthood of Christ our Lord, to study in what respects it was pre-figured by that of the Hebrew priests, and in what it excels their priesthood.

A priest, under the Law, was one ordained and appointed by God, to wait upon him in holy things ; to perform all the services of the sanctuary, especially that of offering sacrifices. Before the giving of the Law by Moses, there was no restriction as to the persons who offered sacrifices. Every father, or first-born son, might offer them for his house : every king or priest for his people. But when the worship of God was formed upon a regular system, the sacred duties of the sanctuary were confined to one tribe, the tribe of Levi ; the more holy duties of the priesthood to one family of that tribe, the family of Aaron ; and the most holy offices of the priesthood itself to one individual of that family, who was called, by way of eminence, the High Priest. From the time when Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the offices of the priesthood, none others might, on pain of death, intrude themselves into it, or perform any priestly service. To this rule, there were some rare excep-

¹ Is. lxiii. 3.

tions, in particular cases, as in the ease of Gideon, or of Manoah.

The institution of the priesthood was itself a striking demonstration, that it is impossible for sinners to approach God, in any act of worship, except through an appointed Mediator and Intercessor; and every thing connected with the *garments, consecration, and duties* of the Levitical priests, contains treasures of typical beauty, as applicable to our great High Priest.) But these have been explored by abler hands, and our limits forbid our entering minutely on the subject. We can only take a slight survey of the more remarkable points, wherein those priests pre-figured Christ; in the *holy garments* prepared for them, the *solemn rites* which admitted them to their office, and the *principal functions* of that office.

The *garments* of the priests generally, their ‘holy garments, for glory and for beauty,’¹ typified the glory of the Divine Majesty, the robe of perfect and lovely Humanity, and the robes of Mediatorial dignity, wherewith Christ our Priest was to be adorned. But in the dress of the high priest, we see the most striking types of his character and work. The embroidery of richest colours, interwoven with gold, which ornamented his robes, denoted the beautiful combination of graces in the person of Christ, which renders him so ‘precious,’ so ‘altogether lovely,’ in the eyes of believers, and in the sight of the Father himself. Every part of the high priest’s garments had some typical signification. We select the following, as the most significant; viz. the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, the breastplate, and the holy crown.

The *shoulder-pieces* were two onyx stones, fastening the ephod, upon each of which were engraved the names

¹ Exod. xxviii. 40. See whole chapter.

of six of the tribes of Israel. The emblematical use of them was thus clearly explained,—‘Thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod, for *stones of memorial* unto the children of Israel ; and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord, upon his shoulders, for a memorial.’

Fastened to the shoulder-pieces, by two chains of pure gold, was another piece of dress, equally significant, the *breastplate of judgment*. This was a doubled square of fine linen, dyed and embroidered like the rest of the ephod, upon which were fixed twelve precious stones set in gold, each engraved with the name of one of the tribes. The signification of this emblem was also plainly declared,—‘Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel, in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually.’ Wearing these emblems, Aaron was constantly reminded, that when he entered the holy place, it was in a public character ; that he must have the interest and welfare of the people whom he represented upon his heart, in approaching the Lord, without prejudice or partiality. And thus Aaron typified the Lord Jesus, who, with tender affection and Almighty power, interposes in behalf of every one of his people, and maintains their cause, and who can never forget any one of them or their concerns. The breastplate was called the breastplate of *judgment*, because it contained the *Urim and Thummim*, the emblems of *counsel and direction*, which the high priest was authorised to seek and expect from God. The Scriptures nowhere inform us, what the Urim and Thummim were ; but the meaning of the original words, *The Lights* (or Illuminations) and *The Perfections*, sufficiently warrant their application to our great High Priest, who communicates to his

Churh, and to every believer, light, wisdom, counsel, righteousness, and every perfect gift, according to their necessities, and in answer to their prayers.

The *holy crown* was a plate of pure gold, in the form of a leaf, bearing the inscription, ‘*Holiness to the Lord.*’ It was fastened upon the fore-front of the mitre, and its signification was thus explained,—‘ It shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron *may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their gifts;* and it shall be always upon his forehead, *that they may be accepted before the Lord.*’ This emblem was well fitted to remind Aaron of the sanctity of his office, as typical mediator between Jehovah and his people, and of the typical expiation he had to make for their involuntary imperfections. And how beautifully did it typify His intercession, on whom alone, of all the sons of men, was truly inscribed, ‘**HOLINESS TO THE LORD;**’ whose perfect obedience in life and death made way for his being made unto his people Sanctification; and who, by continually pleading the merit of his own Holiness, bears the iniquity of their holy things, and renders them acceptable to a Holy God. This emblem, being denominated ‘*the holy crown,*’ was a sign that the great High Priest whom Aaron typified was to be a *King*, as well as a *Priest*; to ‘sit and rule, as a Priest upon his throne.’¹

Y The holy garments having been made, according to the Divine injunctions, Moses was commanded to take Aaron and his sons, and with solemn rites to consecrate them to their high office.² Before they were arrayed in the garments, they were *washed with water;* to denote their need of the cleansing influence of God’s Spirit, etc they could minister with acceptance at his altar; to

¹ Zech. vi. 13.

² Exod xxix., throughout.

typify the unsullied purity of him whom they represented, and the sanctification he gives to his people, who are also the spiritual priesthood.

When dressed in his robes, Aaron was anointed on the head with the holy oil, which, prepared of the finest spices, and the purest oil, the Jews were forbidden, on pain of death, to use for any common purpose; and which strikingly typified the holy union of the Spirit, with which our blessed High Priest was anointed, which runs down to the skirts of his clothing, to the lowest and meanest of his believing people. Sacrifices next followed: a sin-offering, a burnt-offering, and a peace-offering, to make it evident that Aaron and his sons, though admitted to such sacred honours, were sinners, needing pardon and expiation themselves, as well as those for whom they were to intercede. With the blood of the peace-offering, Aaron and his sons were anointed on the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot, to denote the sanctification of the whole man, required in those who approach the Lord, and the perfect holiness of Christ: and, with this blood, mingled with the anointing oil, Aaron and his sons, and their garments, were sprinkled, to show their need of purification by the blood and the Spirit of Christ, and that these two always go together. Our great High Priest needed not to offer sacrifices for himself, but he must offer himself a sacrifice for his people, ere he could enter upon the full discharge of his Sacerdotal office.

Let us now turn to the sacred *functions* belonging to the office of priest. The priests' duties were various. They had to instruct the people. 'The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of

Hosts.¹ They blessed them ; and the terms in which they were commanded to do this, show how spiritual was the worship which believers might enjoy, even under a ritual comparatively obscure. ‘ On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee : The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee : The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.’² The priests were charged with ordering all things in the worship of the sanctuary : they prepared the shew-bread, and renewed it every week upon the table ; they lighted and trimmed the lamps, and kept the fire ever burning upon the altar.³ They were appointed to judge in many doubtful cases,⁴ as in that of the cure of leprosy ; and disobedience to the priest was declared to be a crime punishable with death. ‘ The man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest, that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, even that man shall die.’⁵ The two great distinguishing functions of the priesthood, however, were those of offering sacrifices and burning incense. On the former of these rites we have already enlarged ; but the latter deserves our particular notice. Incense, burnt and ascending to heaven in sweet perfume, formed a beautiful emblem of the Intercession of Christ. The terms used to describe it, testify how precious, and acceptable, and endearing is that which it typified. It was composed of ‘ *sweet spices*,’ ‘ *tempered together*,’ ‘ *pure and holy*,’ ‘ *sweet incense*,’ ‘ *perpetual incense*,’ ‘ *holy for the Lord*.’ It was put before the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, where the Lord met with his people.⁶ The

¹ Mal ii. 7.

² Num. vi. 24–27.

³ Lev. xxiv. 3–8 ; Exod. xxvii. 20, 21.

⁴ Lev. xiii. &c.

⁵ Deut. xvii. 12.

⁶ Exod. xxx. 34–33 ; xxxvii. 29 ; xxx. 8.

sacredness of this emblem was such, that whosoever should imitate it was to be ‘*even cut off*’ from his people.’ Any irregularity in presenting it, was a crime of such magnitude as to require the blood of two sons of Aaron, lately consecrated to be priests: while the efficacy of its proper use was such as to be the means of averting the anger of the Lord against the whole congregation.¹ The plague inflicted upon Israel, for murmuring at the fate of Korah and his company, who died for presuming to offer incense, when they were not of the seed of Aaron,—this plague was stayed by the incense offered by Aaron himself: Aaron ran, and ‘put on incense, and made an atonement for the people, and he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed.’²

These two rites of *sacrifice* and *incense* met in most solemn exercise in the great annual Day of Atonement,³ and prefigured, in the most striking manner, the union of *Atonement* and *Intercession* in the office of our great High Priest. On that day, the high priest entered *alone* into the Holy of Holies; after killing a sin-offering for himself and his house, he burnt sweet incense within the veil, till the cloud of it covered the mercy-seat. Without this he could not have entered, and lived. He then brought some of the blood of the sin-offering, and sprinkled it on and before the mercy-seat. The imperative necessity for both blood and incense being brought into the most holy place, on the only occasion when it was entered by man, taught impressively that sinners cannot have access to the Throne of Grace here, or to the Kingdom of Glory hereafter, except through the Intercession of their Divine High Priest, grounded on his Sacrifice. The peculiar ceremonies of the Day of Atonement the high priest must perform in solitude; because nothing

¹ Lev. x.

² Num. xvi.

³ Lev. xvi.

may, even in appearance, be joined to the work of Christ, either in the way of atonement or of intercession.

A few words will suffice to prove, how faithfully Jesus performed all the functions of the Sacerdotal office, during his sojourn on earth, and, in his death upon the cross ; and how faithfully he has continued to perform them since his ascension to the upper Sanctuary. His diligence as an *Instructor* of the people was shown in the last Essay. Many instances of his *blessing* them may be found in the Gospels. When young children were brought to him, ‘ he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.’ His last act on earth was that of blessing his disciples. ‘ It came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.’ How delightful is it to reflect, that the blessing pronounced by our High Priest is not merely a devout and affectionate prayer for heavenly benefits, which Divine Sovereignty may see good to bestow or to withhold, but an Almighty and infallible grant of those benefits ; that when HE says to a poor trembling sinner, ‘ Go in peace ;’ or, standing in the midst of his assembled people says, ‘ Peace be with you,’ the blessing of peace is as sure to follow, as the light obeyed the same Omnipotent voice, when he said, ‘ Let there be light, and there was light.’ While on earth, Jesus also *took charge of the ordering* of the sanctuary. He expelled worthless intruders, and purified the courts of the Lord. He made himself known both as the *Bread of life*, and the *Giver* of that bread ; as the *Light* of the Church and of the world ; as the *Judge* in all spiritual matters ; *disobedience to whom incurred death.* But the great act of his Priesthood Jesus performed, when he *offered up himself* a Sacrifice for the sins of his people. The ‘ body’ which had been ‘ prepared’ for the purpose,

he laid on his Father's altar ;¹ and afterwards, with his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place,² there to present the incense of his meritorious life and death, with unceasing prevalence, within the veil, in the true Holy of Holies.]

But, to return for a moment to the Levitical priests ; we have seen to what high and sacred honours they were admitted : the near approaches they were allowed to make to the presence of Jehovah ; and how strikingly they typified the Lord Christ. In the earlier parts of Israel's history, we find this tribe distinguishing itself by zeal for God, even against the feelings of natural affection,³—a zeal which procured it an honourable share in the benedictions pronounced by Moses, on the different tribes.³

But, in the sad history of national apostacy, we find this honoured tribe taking the lead in impurity ; causing the people to err from God's statutes ; despising and profaning his holy Name, and grown so mercenary, that they would perform no act of service ‘ for nought. In righteous indignation, therefore, the Lord made those priests contemptible and base before all the people, and sent his messages by the prophets instead.⁴

But, although the Levitical priests had continued faithful, their office was never intended to be permanent. It was only ‘ a figure for the time then present ;’ an introduction to the far more holy and glorious Priesthood of the Son of God.

This brings us to the Second branch of inquiry, viz. *In what respects our Divine Priest excels the priests of the seed of Aaron?* For the most satisfactory answer to this inquiry, we refer to the Epistle to the Hebrews, of

¹ Heb. x. 5.

² Exod. xxxii. 26.

³ Deut. xxxiii. 8-11.

⁴ Mal. i. 10 ; ii. 9.

which it forms the main subject. The apostle, after alluding to the Priestly character and office of Christ, in the second, third, and fourth chapters, begins, in the fifth, a comparison between him and the Aaronic priests, which he carries on, almost uninterruptedly, to the middle of the tenth.¹ The immense superiority of the one priesthood over the other, is manifest in the *difference of nature*, the difference of *order*, the different *mode of consecration*, the different *value of the sacrifices*, the different *tabernacle* into which they entered, and the different *duration* of their ministry.

Let us briefly notice these several particulars ; beginning with the *inferiority of nature*. ‘The law made men priests which had infirmity ;’ who needed washing and blood-sprinkling themselves ; and who, by their impiety, sometimes drew down curses, instead of blessings, upon the people. But our High Priest is the eternal Son of the Father ; possessing in himself all Divine perfections ; in his Human nature, ‘ holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners ;’ and in his Mediatorial authority, ‘ made higher than the heavens.’ And, although so infinitely exalted above us, as God, and so unlike us in character, as Man ; our High Priest is not one who ‘ cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.’ This constitutes the perfection of his nature, that he has Almighty strength now and for ever ; and yet, that he was once ‘ compassed with infirmity ;’ so that he ‘ can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.’ He knows, experimentally, the trials and temptations which his people have to go through ; for so agonizing were his own conflicts, in the days of his flesh, that they forced him to offer up ‘ prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears ;’ and

¹ Heb. from iv. 14, to middle of chapter tenth.

made him even entreat that the cup of bitterness might, if possible, pass from him. By the union of his Divine and Human natures, then, Jesus is truly '*such an High Priest as became us*',—the only Being in the universe who could make effectual Atonement and Intercession for our sins.

His authority as Priest, does not, however, rest upon man's judgment of his fitness, but upon the express *appointment of God*. 'No man (saith St Paul) taketh this honour upon himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' And, in this respect, Christ was honoured above Aaron, that his *consecration* was solemnized with *an oath* by God, 'inasmuch as, not without an oath, he was made Priest; for those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.'

This brings us to another point of superiority, that arising from the *order of priesthood*. St Paul lays great stress upon this point, viz. of Christ being a Priest, after the order of *Melchisedec*, not after the order of Aaron. He proves that Melchisedec was greater even than Abraham, having received tithes from that patriarch, and bestowed a blessing upon him; therefore he must be greater than Levi or Aaron. The titles of *Melchisedec*, *King of Righteousness*, and *King of Peace*, were strikingly typical of those of Christ; and the obscurity which hangs over his parentage and posterity, his birth, and death, render him a fit type of the Son of God, whose existence is from everlasting to everlasting, and who has no successor in his Priestly office. The apostle argues, that the prediction of a priest of Melchisedec's order, proved the imperfection of the Levitical order; otherwise 'what further need was there that another Priest should arise,

after another order ?' And our Lord, having sprung out of the tribe of Judah, was evidently that ' Priest upon his throne,' who came to supersede both the priesthood of Aaron's line, and the royal authority of David's house, to reign a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedee.

The next point of comparison is in the respective *value of the sacrifices* presented. But here all words must fail. What was the blood of all the cattle upon a thousand hills, to the preeious blood of Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father, the Heir of all things, the Deity Inear-nate? He had no sin of his own to atone for, otherwise his death could not have atoned for others. He ' offered himself without spot to God ;' and so infinitely valuable was this Saerifice, that whereas the Levitieal priests stood daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins, Jesus, by his one Offering of himself, once for all, perfectly satisfied divine Justice, and made an end of sin.

Another essential point in which Christ exceelled the Jewish high priest, was in the *different sanctuary*, within whieh he entered, after offering his Sacrifice. The high priest entered the inner sanctuary, rendered holy by the emblem of God's covenant, and by the visible tokens of his presenee. But Christ entered a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, ' the true ta-bernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man, even into heaven itself, now to appear in the presenee of God for us.'

And whereas the Jewish high priests were, one after another, summoned by death to resign their office to a successor, Jesus 'continueth ever,' beeause ' he hath an unchangeable priesthood,' being made ' an High Priest for ever, after the order of Melehisdec.'

How satisfying, how comfortable is this conclusion of

the apostle, ‘ Now, of the things which we have spoken this is the sum : We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.’¹

What, then, are the duties to which we should be moved, by such a wonderful and blessed assurance ? First, we must *consider* the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.² Let us consider the dignity of his person, as God, ‘ who built all things ;’ his suitableness to our necessities, being made in all things like unto his brethren ; his faithfulness to him that appointed him ; and his mercy and faithfulness to us his poor brethren ; and then say, brethren, if he is not ‘ *such an High Priest as became us?* ’

A due consideration of the person, work, and character of our great High Priest will, by God’s grace, lead to all the practical effects which St Paul shows it is calculated to produce. It will bring us to the throne of grace with humble boldness, with a true heart, and with full assurance of faith ;³ for, whereas the entrance of the Levitical priest, once a-year, into the sanctuary, implied that ‘ the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest,’ and warned the people to keep at a reverential *distance*, the entrance of Jesus into the true Sanctuary, has opened a new and living Way, whereby we are invited to *draw near*.⁴

Consideration of this subject should also teach us the necessity of purifying our conscience from dead works to serve the living God ; of stedfastness in our profession, of abounding in love, and in good works.⁵

The best way to *understand* the priestly office of Christ, is to *make use* of it ; and, to make use of it, we

¹ Heb. viii. 1.

² Heb. iii. 1.

³ Heb. iv. 14-16.

⁴ Heb. ix. 7-14.

⁵ Heb. x. 19-24.

must deeply feel our need of it. It is when the conscience is burdened with sins known, and reflects on its innumerable sins unknown, that lie naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do ; it is then, that it is blessed to know, ‘ we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God ;’ that the incense and the blood which he is even now presenting to God for us, are all prevalent, all efficacious.

Or, when after carefully preparing for, and diligently performing, any act of worship, we find it has, nevertheless, been stained by many blots and impurities ; O then we know how to value the holy crown upon the forehead of our great High Priest ; that holiness of his which bears all the iniquity of our holy things.

Or, when engaging in new and arduous duties, we feel our utter ignorance and weakness, then how precious to us are the Urim and Thummim of our High Priest ; his tender sympathy and compassion, joined to his divine wisdom, strength, and faithfulness.

When forgotten or forsaken by earthly friends, or when oppressed by griefs beyond their reach to cure, then how sweet, how consoling, to read our unworthy names upon the breast-plate and the shoulder-pieces of our heavenly Priest ; to be assured that we are not forgotten by him, but that our individual names and interests are indelibly engraved on his heart, in tenderest love ; and on his shoulders, securing Omnipotent aid. O ! it is almost too delightful a thought to realize, our very names and persons being so highly honoured, so dearly loved, by Jesus ; and yet it is no more than we are bound to believe, from the moment we cast ourselves on his meritorious work of Atonement and Intercession.

What, then, is the use *we* are making of this office of

Christ? Are we using it exclusively? And are we using it heartily and constantly? First, are we using it exclusively? It is not peculiar, alas! to the apostate Church of Rome, to associate other sacrifices, and other intercessions, with the only true Sacrifice and Intercession of Christ. Many who call themselves Protestants, are guilty of this presumptuous sin, by mingling something of their own with the work of Christ, for justification, and by trusting to their own prayers, or those of a fellow mortal, without seeking the only prevailing Intercession of Jesus. We ought, indeed, to be thankful for the prayers of our Christian brethren; but we must ever remember, that it is only because our High Priest is praying within the Sanctuary, that the prayers of his people without, can be heard and answered. It is only when perfumed with his incense, that their prayers can rise with acceptance before the Throne.

But not only must we use this office of Christ exclusively; we must also use it heartily and constantly. He loves to be employed by us. We cannot fill his hands too full of our free-will offerings and thank-offerings. For, although we dare not, on peril of eternal death, mingle any thing with his atoning Sacrifice or Mediation, we are bound to bring to him sacrifices of prayer and praise, of holy obedience and devotedness, to present for us to the Father.

And here, must we not all confess our shameful deficiencies? Is our diligence in making use of our blessed High Priest in any degree proportioned to his mercy and faithfulness, his greatness and unchangeableness, to the value of his sacrifice, to the preciousness of his incense, to the order of his priesthood, to the solemnity of his consecration, to the sacredness of the temple where he ministers, or to the depth of our own necessities? Alas! No.

We have neither the boldness of access, the full assurance of faith, the pure conscience, the stedfast profession, the sure and stedfast hope, the love, nor the good works, which belief in ‘such an High Priest’ should inspire.

This is our only hope, that, as the incense offered by Aaron, was made the means of stopping the plague, inflicted for sins against the typical priesthood, so the continual Intercession of Jesus procures pardon and eternal salvation for those who involuntarily sin against his true Priesthood.

ESSAY XXIII.

KING.

THIS title is often applied to God, as the supreme Ruler and Protector of the universe ; and, in this sense, it belongs equally to the Father and the Son : ‘The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.’¹ But, in an especial sense, it belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, as he is appointed by the Father, KING and HEAD of the Church.

To this office he was anointed, as well as to those of Prophet and Priest ; and in this character he was clearly and abundantly foreshown, in types and prophecies of old.

First, let us consider how Christ our King was foreshown in types. It was a signal instance of God’s wisdom and power in bringing good out of evil, that he made the sin of Israel, in desiring a king, the occasion of typifying, in the clearest manner, the Kingly office of his Son. Israel had, for nearly four hundred years, been under the immediate government of Jehovah. He gave them their civil laws, and made known his mind to them by the Urim and Thummim, by the prophets or by visions ; and their rulers and judges possessed no power but what they derived directly from Him. But Israel grew

¹ Ps. xcvi. 3.

weary of this honourable distinction ; and, drawing an excuse from the misconduct of Samuel's sons, desired to have a king over them.¹ This desire seems not to have been sinful in itself ; as God had formerly signified to Moses that the Hebrews should have kings chosen from among their brethren ; and had given instructions for their conduct. Indeed, very early in the Patriarchal age, intimations had been given, not only of a royal sceptre to rise out of Israel,² but of the particular tribe from which it should rise, and in which it should remain, until the coming of Shiloh, the Prince of Peace.³ But the desire was sinful in its motive, implying weariness of God's government ; and sinful in its end, viz. to be ‘like all the nations,’⁴ so sinful, that a thunder-storm was sent to testify the greatness of their wickedness in God's sight ;⁵ and Saul, their first king, was given to them in his anger, and cut off in his wrath.

After the first acts of his reign, which were promising, Saul was the very opposite of Christ, in character and conduct. But, in David and Solomon, taken together, and in their respective reigns, we have a full, rich, and perfect representation, as far as earthly things can represent heavenly ones, of the Kingly attributes of Christ, and of the nature and privileges of his kingdom.

In the anointing of David to be king, the prediction of Jacob began to be fulfilled ; for he was of the tribe of Judah. And, in the covenant made with David, for the continuance of his family on the throne, till the Messiah, his Seed, should come, we see the great importance God attaches to the Kingly office of his Son ; for he thus indicated, a thousand years before Christ's birth, the very family from which he should spring ; and in a

¹ 1 Sam. viii. ² Num. xxiv. 17. ³ Gen. xlvi. 10.

⁴ 1 Sam. viii. 20. ⁵ 1 Sam. xii. 16–25.

long line of typic平 predecessors, shadowed forth his Royal, as well as his Prophetical and Priestly offices.

The points in which Christ was typified by David, are so numerous, that we can notice only the most remarkable. His *name*, signifying *Dear*, or *Beloved*, was similar to that of the Beloved Son of God; and David is honoured, above all other typical characters, in his very name being given to the Saviour, and retained by him, even after his ascension to glory. As Prophet, Jesus was ‘like unto Moses;’ as Priest, he was ‘after the order of Melchisedec;’ but as King, he is ‘*David*, God’s ‘*Servant David*,’¹ ‘the Root and the Offspring of David.’²

The first description we have of David’s *person and qualities*, brings the Saviour to our mind; he was ‘ruddy, and of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to;’³ like Him who, in the believer’s eye, is ‘white and ruddy,’ ‘the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.’⁴ David was not only ‘a comely person,’ but ‘prudent in matters’ (or speech), ‘a mighty valiant man’ in war, and ‘the Lord was with him;’⁵ in all these qualifications he resembled Zion’s King.

The *sufferings and persecutions*, through which David passed, in his way to the promised kingdom; the patience, and trust in God, which he exercised under them; the illustrious victories he won over the enemies of God’s people, during his state of humiliation; his generous treatment of his personal enemies, and their reluctant acknowledgments of his integrity and virtue;—all these, strikingly exemplified the state and character of the Son of David, while passing through this world to his throne in the heavens.

¹ Ezek. xxxiv. 23.

² Rev. xxii. 16.

³ 1 Sam. xvi. 12.

⁴ Cant. v. 10-16.

⁵ 1 Sam. xvi. 13.

At length the promises were fulfilled ; David was delivered from all his enemies, and crowned king, first over Jndah, and, after some years, over all Israel ; and, as he had typified the Saviour, in his previons *conflicts and sufferings*, he was now to typify him in his *victorious dominion*.

As soon as David enjoyed rest from all his enemies round about, he purposed building a house for the Lord. But this honour was not assigned to him.¹ ‘ His proper work was to subdue or extirpate the remains of the Canaanites, and other enemies, and put Israel in full and quiet possession of the Land of Promise ; to reform the state of religion, compose hymns of praise for the Church in after ages, and to make immense preparations for the Temple itself.’² David was a ‘ man of war’ all his days ; and the disturbances, public and domestic, which, for his sins, distracted the latter part of his reign, would have been very unsuitable to so holy and grand a work, as that of building the Lord’s house. But God promised him a son, who should be ‘ a man of rest,’ and who should build His house ; at the same time, giving him such promises as filled his heart with the profoundest gratitude and admiration ; viz. *that God would establish his throne for ever ; that his house and his kingdom should be established for ever before God.*³ From the exalted strains in which David spake of this covenant, we cannot doubt but he looked beyond its primary fulfilment, in the continuance of his family on the throne of Judah, to its full accomplishment, in the everlasting reign of Him who was to be both his Son and his Lord.

But we must proceed to the reign of Solomon, to per-

¹ 2 Sam. vii. ; 1 Chron. xvii.

² Scott.

³ 2 Sam. vii. 11-16 ; Ps. lxxxix. 19-37.

ceive additional characteristics of the reign of Messiah. As David typified him in *triumphing over all enemies*, Solomon typified him in the *peace and prosperity*, which were the fruits of those triumphs. All the spiritual perfections laid up in Christ our King, and all the spiritual benefits enjoyed by his people, were represented by the gifts of nature and of Providence bestowed on Solomon, and by the temporal blessings enjoyed by Israel, under his long and prosperous reign.

In answer to his petition for wisdom, God gave him a wise and understanding heart, so that there was none like him, before or after him. And, in reward of this choice, God gave him also what he had not asked, both riches and honour ; so that in these respects also, he excelled all other kings.¹ So great was the peace enjoyed under his mild and equitable sway, that it is said, ‘ Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.’ His subjects increased and multiplied in proportion ; they lived in plenty and in joy ; we are told of the amazing abundance of all kinds of provisions in the land, and that pure gold was in such profusion, that ‘ silver was little accounted of in the days of Solomon.’ The fame of his wisdom, riches, and prosperity, spread into all countries round about ; his power brought them all under tribute. In the strong language of Scripture, which doubtless has reference to his typical character, ‘ All the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart ; and they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold,’ &c. ‘ And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the bor-

¹ 1 Kings iii. 9–13.

der of Egypt : they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.'

But the great glory of Solomon's reign was the work assigned him by the Lord, of building a house for his Name.¹ In this, especially, he typified the 'Prince of Peace,' who builds the spiritual temple of 'living stones,' to be 'an habitation of God through the Spirit.' The temple of Solomon, though of small dimensions, compared with many buildings in ancient and modern times, was exceedingly magnificent, from the immense quantities of gold and silver with which it was enriched, and the exquisite workmanship bestowed upon it. But its true glory consisted in the presence of Jehovah, visibly manifested, by the ark of the covenant placed within, and by the cloud which filled this house, as it had formerly filled the tabernacle ; assuring Solomon that it would be the residence of the Lord, and the centre of the worship of Israel, for generations to come.² This assurance was further confirmed by the gracious promises made to Solomon at the time of the dedication. In answer to his devout and comprehensive prayer, God promised that 'his eyes and his heart should be there perpetually.'³ And the continuance of God's favour to Solomon and his posterity was promised, *on condition* of their obedience and faithful adherence to his worship and service. But if they should turn away from the Lord, it was as plainly declared that he would cut them off from their land, and make the temple a desolation.

Alas ! how soon were those threatenings drawn down upon Israel, by the wicked example of Solomon himself!⁴ Him, whom we so lately admired, in the humility, fervour, and reverence of his prayer to Jehovah, we

¹ 1 Kings v., vi., vii., & viii.

² 2 Chron. vi.

³ 2 Chron. vii.

⁴ 1 Kings xi.

behold, soon after, burning incense and sacrificing to the false gods of the heathen. He, who was so highly honoured in being employed to build a house for the Lord, now builds an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab ; and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon ; and for all the gods of his strange wives. Can we wonder that ‘the Lord was angry with Solomon,’ and declared his determination to rend the kingdom from him, and give it to another?¹ Even the mitigations of this sentence were suited to humble Solomon : the kingdom was not to be rent from him during his life, and two tribes were to remain with his son ; but this was only for the sake of his father David, God’s servant David. In punishment of his heinous sins, God stirred up adversaries unto Solomon, which embittered the remainder of his reign ; and, under his successor, the nation was divided into two distinct kingdoms, those of Judah and Israel. Yet were the promises of God to David fulfilled, in their primary sense, in a remarkable manner, by the continuance of the regal dignity in his family ; in proof of which, we quote a passage from Scott’s Introduction to ‘the First Book of Kings.’—
‘The descendants of Solomon reigned over the kingdom
‘of Judah till the captivity, for about three hundred and
‘eighty-seven years. So that from the accession of Da-
‘vid, during a course of four hundred and sixty-seven
‘years, the throne was filled by his descendants, in lineal
‘descent, except as the sons of Josiah succeeded one an-
‘other. During this long term of years, there was not
‘a single revolution, or civil war ; and but one short in-
‘terruption, by Athaliah’s usurpation. Perhaps it
‘would be difficult to find, in universal history, any
‘thing equal to this permanent internal order and tran-

¹ 1 Kings xi. 11–13.

‘quillity. Let the reader recollect how many revolutions, civil wars, murders of reigning kings by rivals or successors, and changes in the succession, are found in the English history, during the same number of years. Above half the kings of Judah supported true religion, and several of them were eminently pious men ; and it is remarkable that their reigns were much longer than those of the wicked princes ; so that they comprise much above three hundred years of this period ; and the greatest part of this time was evidently passed, either in profound peace, or in remarkable prosperity.’

Thus the covenant made with David for his house was most faithfully performed ; the chastisements inflicted upon his children were essential parts of that covenant ; and their sins alone prevented them from enjoying its richest blessings. But that a nobler Seed than Solomon, and a nobler Kingdom than that of Judah, was intended, is evident ; especially when we consider him, not only as a *type*, but as an illustrious *prophet* of ‘Messiah the Prince.’ Perhaps no other prophet was honoured with such clear and grand views of Christ our King : and the elevated and emphatic language of those Psalms which describe, primarily, David himself, and Solomon his son, so far exceeds any thing literally accomplished in them, or that could be accomplished in any mere human sovereign, as brings out in the strongest light their typical characters.

Take for instance the second and the eighteenth Psalms, where David rejoices in his own deliverance from his enemies, and his accession to the throne. The expressions employed are such as carry the mind far beyond a mere human king, to God’s eternal Son, whom he has anointed King of Zion, to whom he has promised to give the

heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession ; who could say, in a far deeper sense than David could, ‘ The sorrows of hell compassed me about ; the snares of death prevented me ; ’ ‘ He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters,’—and, ‘ Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people ; and thou hast made me the Head of the heathen : a people whom I have not known shall serve me.’

Or, take the seventy-second and eighty-ninth Psalms, where the long and prosperous reign of Solomon, and the perpetuity of the throne in his family are predicted ; and say, if the expressions there used could have their full accomplishment in any but a *Divine King* ? for he is described as eternal, and unchangeable ; perfectly wise, just, holy, and merciful. Yet, this King cannot be God the Father ; for he is anointed, established, strengthened, and exalted by *Him*. He must be therefore God the Son, ‘ God manifest in the flesh.’

In the 110th Psalm, David speaks, not with respect to himself or to Solomon in the first place, but in plain terms, of Christ alone. For no other king can be said to sit at God’s right hand, or to be a Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Universal victory is promised him by the Father. All people must submit to him ; either by being made willing in the day of his power, or by being struck through in the day of his wrath. The afflictions through which he would pass, or the refreshments which his human nature would require, in his way to the throne, are also intimated, by the concluding verse: ‘ He shall drink of the brook by the way : therefore shall he lift up his head.’

Similar intimations of the Divine Majesty of ‘ Messiah the Prince’ abound in the writings of the prophets. The

Prinee of Peaee, predieted by Isaiah, whose government should have no end, upon the throne of David, was to be called, THE MIGHTY GOD, &c.¹ The righteous Branch whom the Lord would raise unto David, the King who was to reign and prosper, who was to execute judgment and justice in the earth, in whose days Judah should be saved, and Israel dwell safely, was to be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.² The Son of Man, of whom Daniel had so magnificent a vision, was invested with *universal and everlasting dominion* ;³ a dominion ascribable to Deity alone, and especially to the Mediatorial authority of the Son. It was revealed by the mouth of Mieah, that the LORD would reign over his people in Mount Zion, from thenceforth, even for ever.⁴ And Zeelariah, when extolling the justice and saving power, the lowliness and peace-speaking character of Zion's King, predicts also his universal dominion, that it should be ‘from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.’⁵

At length, the *Rod* came forth out of *Jesse*, the *Branch* grew out of his roots, which was to stand for an ensign of the people; to whom the Gentiles would seek, and whose rest was to be glorious.⁶ That *Child* was born, who was both *Son of the Highest*, and *Son of David*; who was to reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of whose kingdom there shall be no end.⁷

And how was this glorious King received by the house of Jacob? He was despised and rejected,—the nation in general would not have him to reign over them. And why? They understood not the nature of his kingdom, and, consequently, mistook his character as King. Ex-

¹ Is. ix. 6, 7.

² Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

³ Dan. vii. 13, 14.

⁴ Micah iv. 7.

⁵ Zech. ix. 9, 10.

⁶ Is. xi. 1, 10.

⁷ Luke i. 32, 33.

pecting a king, who was once more to extend their territory, and conquer their foes, like David ; and, at the same time, to reign in earthly pomp and splendour, like Solomon ; they overlooked altogether the previous humiliation and sufferings, through which, like David, he must pass on his way to the throne. No wonder then that they could not recognise their expected Messiah, in an obscure Galilean, without worldly pretensions, and disdaining an earthly kingdom ; although he declared himself ‘ greater than Solomon,’ accepted Hosannahs as the SON OF DAVID, and exhibited undoubted traces of Divine Sovereignty, and Mediatorial authority.

But whatever excuses, for their ignorance of the nature of Christ’s kingdom, may be pleaded in behalf of the Jews, his eotemporaries, we, in our day, can plead none. What meaning then do we attach to the term, ‘ kingdom of Christ,’ ‘ kingdom of God,’ or ‘ kingdom of heaven ?’

It seems, in Scripture, to be used principally in three senses; *1st*, as the *visible church*, especially under the New Testament ; *2d*, as the *covenant state of believers*, or the work of grace in their hearts, which may be called the *kingdom of grace*; *3d*, as the place of *eternal happiness hereafter*, or the *kingdom of glory*.

In the *first* of these senses, we must take the term, when our Lord says, the kingdom of God shall be taken from the Jews, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof;¹ and when he compares the kingdom of heaven to a net, cast into the sea, which gathered of every kind, good and bad.² In the *second* sense it must be understood, when he says, ‘ The kingdom of God cometh not with observation ;—for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.’³ And in the *third* sense, as the kingdom of glory, when the Judge and King represents himself

¹ Mat. xxi. 43. ² Mat. xiii. 47. ³ Luke xvii. 20, 21.

saying to the righteous in the last day, ‘Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’¹

Now, over ‘the kingdom of God,’ or ‘of heaven,’ in all these senses, Christ, by the appointment of his Father, reigns supreme. While on earth, he showed himself *King or Head of the visible Church*;² changing her ordinances, her priests, and mode of worship. He also proclaimed laws and privileges for the *kingdom of grace*, and effectually brought men into that kingdom: subduing them to his sovereignty, rescuing them from the tyranny of Satan, and making them his faithful and free subjects; and by his omnipotent grace, defending them from all spiritual enemies. In some cases, his converting power was exercised instantaneously, as in Matthew, and in Zaccheus; in other cases, gradually, as in Thomas; but in all, effectually and eternally. His power over the *kingdom of glory*, Jesus also declared, while on earth; promising thrones to his apostles,³ and an immediate entrance into Paradise to the penitent thief;⁴ and declaring that at the end of the world, the Son of Man would send forth his angels, to gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and to cast them into a furnace of fire, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.⁵

But although Jesus was King, even in his humiliation; and had been, from the beginning, Head of the Church, and ‘King of saints;’ he had not full possession of the Mediatorial throne till after his ascension into the heavens. It was *then*, when he had died and risen again, that he was by the right hand of God *exalted, a Prince and a Saviour*;⁶ that he went to *receive for himself a king-*

¹ Mat. xxv. 34.

² See Essay on ‘Head of the Church.’

³ Luke xxii. 29, 30.

⁴ Luke xxiii. 43.

⁵ Mat. xiii. 41, 42

⁶ Acts v. 31.

*dom;*¹ and that the decree of the Father began to take full effect, ‘ Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool.’²

Since that glorious crisis, Jesus has reigned with increasing lustre and power, both in his visible and invisible kingdoms: the gifts of his Spirit have been more largely dispensed; the laws and privileges of his kingdom have been better understood; the provisions of his subjects have been more plentiful, consisting, not of ‘ meat and drink, but of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;’ their wealth has been incalculable, not of silver and gold, but of ‘ durable riches,’ ‘ the unsearchable riches of Christ.’ They have dwelt safely as to spiritual things; and their numbers have been as the sand on the sea shore.

As yet, it must be owned, the reign of Christ on earth has resembled that of David, more than that of Solomon: being distinguished for gradual victory, rather than for stable peace. His armies are daily planting his standard upon new territories, and gaining fresh advantages over the enemy: yet still his kingdom is sadly rent by divisions within, as well as assaulted by foes without. The materials for the Lord’s house are gathering in, in great abundance; but the times are too warlike for the building to rise in its beauty.

But, blessed be God, we have the sure promise of his Word, that our King shall hereafter reign like Solomon; and we already have tokens of the approach of that happy period, when the Church shall have ‘ rest on every side, and neither adversary nor evil occurrent.’

Our king has indeed many victories to gain; and his people must encounter many hard struggles, ere this blissful state can commence. But commence it will, in God’s good time: and the prospect is sufficient to cheer

¹ Luke xix. 12-15.

² Ps. cx. 1.

and animate us in the meanwhile. For then will the honour of Christ our King, and the prosperity of his people, exceed all that we can now imagine. ‘ All kings shall fall down before him ; all nations shall serve him.’¹ It shall no longer be a question, whether kings and rulers are bound to promote the cause of the King of kings, they shall deem it their highest honour, and their first duty so to do ; and shall openly acknowledge his authority, and use all their influence to maintain the worship and laws of God. There shall be no lack of worldly substance for carrying on the work of the Lord, as is now so lamentably the case ; for all kings and their subjects shall bring their silver and gold as gifts to Christ.² His fame shall spread through all the earth ; all nations shall come to him, to hear his wisdom, and to learn of him, to take upon them his easy yoke, and find rest to their souls. His own ancient people, who are ‘ afflicted, but not for ever ;’ who have abode many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice,—shall then ‘ return, and seek the Lord their God, and DAVID THEIR KING ; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.’³ Surely this, and similar predictions, imply the conversion and restoration of the house of Jacob, not as individuals merely, but as a nation, to the favour, the peculiar favour of Jehovah.⁴

How blessed will be the peace enjoyed by the Church in the latter days ! Then they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, neither shall they learn war any more. Then shall every man call his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree ;⁵ then shall the temple of the Lord rise in magnificence and beauty, in the sight of an admiring universe.

¹ Ps. lxxii. 11. ² Is. xl ix. 22, 23 ; lii. 15 ; lx. throughout.

³ Hosea iii. ⁴ Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23–31; xxxvii. 18–28.

⁵ Micah iv. 3–4.

But, in the *kingdom of glory* alone, is the power and majesty of Christ our King fully manifested. There he is seated with his Father upon his throne, and on his head are ‘many crowns :’ on his vesture, and on his thigh is a name written, KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS.¹ There alone is perfect rest from every evil and every adversary ; and all his subjects are put in irreversible possession of peace and joy. There the true temple, not made with hands, is building ; and the living stones, after being squared and polished here below, are, one by one, removed to it. When the number of these stones shall be completed, Jesus will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father ;² for the period fixed for the duration of his kingdom will have arrived : all things will be put under him ; his enemies will be for ever put under his feet ; his friends for ever blessed. Still, it will be the theme of all holy beings throughout eternity, that by his triumphant sword this heavenly rest was won ; by his Almighty hand this Temple was reared. His people also shall be *kings*. To every one that overcometh will he give to sit down with him on his throne ; even as he also overcame, and is set down with his Father in his throne. To every one of them will be given a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.³

There is some difficulty in reconciling the declaration of St Paul, above alluded to, that the kingdom of Christ shall *come to an end*, with those Scriptures which declare that ‘*of his kingdom* (as the Son of David) *there shall be no end*,’⁴ that ‘*his dominion* (as Son of Man), is an everlasting dominion, which *shall not pass away*, and his kingdom that which *shall not be destroyed* ;⁵ with the words addressed by the Father to the Son, ‘*Thy throne,*

¹ Rev. xix. 12, 16.

² 1 Cor. xv. 24–28.

³ Rev. i. 6 ; iii. 21.

⁴ Luke i. 33.

⁵ Dan. vii. 14.

*O God, is for ever and ever;*¹ and with the triumphant song of the blessed, ‘The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of *his Christ*; and he shall reign for ever and ever.’²

In attempting to remove this difficulty, we gladly avail ourselves of the remarks of an able commentator. In a note on 1 Cor. xv. 24-28, he says, ‘Christ’s delivering ‘up the kingdom to God the Father, no more proves ‘that he will *in all respects* cease to be a king, or to have ‘any reign or dominion, than the Father’s delivering the ‘kingdom to the Son, proves that the Father himself ‘then ceased to be a King, and parted with his own rule ‘and dominion over all. Christ’s natural and essential ‘kingdom, which he has in common with the Father and ‘the Spirit, *as God*, will have no end; and he, in his ‘human nature, will wear the honour of his office, and ‘of all his mediatorial *performances*, and of their secure ‘and abiding *effects and consequences*; and will live in a ‘state of superior authority and glory, like the Head of the ‘church, for ever and ever; and therefore, *in these respects*, ‘his throne and kingdom shall never pass away, or be ‘destroyed.’³

To the same effect, Scott says, ‘The distinction be-‘tween the *absolute*, universal, and everlasting kingdom ‘of God, the Governor of all, and the *mediatorial* king-‘dom of Christ, as instituted for the benefit of fallen man, ‘is everywhere implied in Scripture. The Father, as ‘the Head of the absolute kingdom, ceased not to reign ‘when the Son was advanced to the mediatorial throne; ‘as that authority was intended to endure only for a sea-‘son, in order to accomplish certain important ends, to ‘the glory of God in man’s salvation.

‘After the day of judgment, this kingdom will be ter-

¹ Heb. i. 8.

² Rev. xi. 15.

³ Guyse.

'minated ; Christ, having executed his eommission, will cease to reign " over all worlds," as Mediator, having publicly " delivered up the kingdom to God, in the person of the Father ;" *yet he will in human nature retain a peculiar authority over his redeemed people;* and as one with the Father, he will, with Him and the Holy Spirit, reign One " God over all, blessed for evermore :" nor will he any more cease to reign, *in this sense,* when he has given up the mediatorial kingdom, than the Father ceased to reign, when he appointed the Son to that kingdom.'¹

Since, then, Christ is anointed and exalted King ; since he reigns with such infinite wisdom, righteousness, faithfulness, goodness, and meekness towards his friends, and with such terrible vengeance towards his enemies ; how unspeakably important is it for every one to ascertain, whether or not he be a true and loyal subject of this awful Monarch ! As members of the Church visible, we all profess to be the subjects of Christ. But this will only deepen our condemnation, if we are not subjects of the kingdom of grace. There is a people over whom Christ reigns, in deed and in truth, who are cordially, though not perfectly, subdued to his authority ; who serve and obey him, not indeed as he deserves to be obeyed, but willingly, cheerfully, and devotedly ; who offer to him the homage of broken and contrite hearts, of fervent affections, and lives employed in his service ; who, knowing their own weakness, and the number and power of their foes, look up continually to their King, for protection and deliverance, especially from those inward foes, which war against their holiness and peace.

The true subjects of Christ desire the advancement of his cause on earth more ardently than they desire any

¹ Scott.

temporal thing : his cause has become theirs since he has made their cause his. The petition they so often present, ‘ Thy kingdom come,’ is no vain repetition in the mouth of God’s saints. Their hearts are deeply engaged in what their lips utter ; and they listen with more eagerness to intelligence of Christ’s kingdom, whether it relate to a nation, or to a single soul, than to intelligence of any other kind. They do earnestly pray for the time, when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of our God, and of his Christ, and they delight to engage in the humblest or the most arduous office, that may tend to hasten that happy time.

It may form no bad test of our personal interest in Christ, and our progress in love to him, to inquire how we are affected by the interests of his kingdom. When we are first awakened from the slumbers of our natural state, and see the frightful gulf into which we had so nearly fallen ; gratitude and wonder at our escape, and fear lest we should again be ensnared to our destruction, engross all our thoughts. Soon, however, we are moved by natural affection, to seek the salvation of relatives and friends : and then, by compassion, to long for the salvation of all mankind. But, in proportion as we grow in the knowledge and love of God, and are delivered from engrossing anxiety respecting our personal salvation, we seek the same objects from a motive far higher than love or compassion to man ; even from a desire that God may be glorified, that Christ may be loved, obeyed, and honoured, as in heaven, so in earth. Is it then a matter of rejoicing to us, that Christ’s kingdom shall come, in such prosperity as we have seen it predicted in Holy Scripture ? Is this prospect refreshing to our hearts, under all the contempt and dishonour with which we now see him treated ? Or, do we read and hear those predictions,

merely as points of future history, which little concern us, satisfied if we can but secure the safety of our own souls? If so, it is much to be feared, Christ is not yet enthroned in our hearts, our natural hostility to him is but partially subdued, his kingdom has not come to us in power, but in word only; and if we feel but little interest in the advancement of his kingdom here, we have little evidence of sharing in its glories hereafter.

Finally, let us all join in the prayer of the Church to Christ her King, ‘Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.’

Now, unto him who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

PART V.

TITLES EXPRESSIVE OF THE RELATIONS IN
WHICH, AS MAN AND MEDIATOR, THE
SON STANDS TO THE FATHER.

ESSAY XXIV.

GOD'S ELECT SERVANT—HIS BELOVED, &c.

BEFORE entering further upon the gracious offices which Christ bears to his people, and the precious benefits which, as Head of the Church, he bestows upon them, we propose to consider some of the relations which, as Man and Mediator, he sustains to God his Father.

The principal titles which express those relations are, God's 'Elect,' his 'Servant,' 'The Branch,' God's 'Beloved,' and 'The Man of His Right Hand.'

These titles are, in Scripture, so interwoven with each other, and the relations they express are so closely connected, that we may view them to advantage collectively, as is done by the prophet Isaiah. In one verse he presents the Redeemer in three of the relations above mentioned, as the 'Servant' of God, his 'Elect,' and He 'in whom God's soul delighteth,' or 'His Beloved.'¹ While,

¹ Is. xlvi. 1.

however, our attention need not be confined strictly to one of these titles at a time, we shall, for the sake of distinctness, give to each a separate illustration, in the first place ; and afterwards, by God's help, take a general view of the whole.

Of the name ELECT, we merely remark, that Christ is thus styled, because he was chosen and set apart, from all eternity, to the great work of man's redemption ; and that whom God chooses, must be perfectly qualified for the office to which he chooses him. The Son was ' Elect,' or chosen, to be the ' Servant' of the Father.

SERVANT.

We shall, therefore, consider next, in what sense the name SERVANT is applied to the Son.¹ All *creatures* are God's servants, in a certain sense, as they are all subject to his power, and unable to resist his will. But the Son is not a creature. In his original nature, he is one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ' the same in substance, equal in power and glory.' All *believers* are God's servants, in a higher sense, as those who, being redeemed from the bondage of sin and Satan, serve and obey God, in righteousness and holiness, as their bounden duty, as well as their delight. But neither in this sense can the Son of God be called his Servant.

By this name, are also called those who serve God, not only in general obedience, but also *in some particular function or calling*. Thus the Apostle Paul calls himself the servant of God, because he was called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God ;² and, in this sense, Christ Jesus is termed the Father's Servant,³ to exe-

¹ See Cruden on ' Servant.'

² Rom. i. 1.

³ Is. liii. 11.

cute his will as Mediator, in working man's redemption. There is yet another sense in which men are, in Scripture, called *God's servants*; they are often so denominated, who, in their general conduct, did not recognise his authority, and who, in their hearts, it is feared, were often strangers to him, but who were made use of as *instruments to perform his will, in the work of some particular mercy or judgment*. Thus Cyrus was called the servant of God, his 'shepherd,' and his 'anointed,'¹ because he was to perform his pleasure in the release of his people from captivity, and in the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple. Thus also Nebuchadnezzar was called the servant of God,² because he inflicted his judgments upon Judea and the neighbouring countries.

Thus we see that, for the performance of inferior works, God chooses human servants; and, by his Grace, or by his Providence, enables them to perform their appointed services. But, when the vast work of Redemption was to be performed, his choice could be fixed only upon his own co-equal and well-beloved Son, as the SERVANT to perform it. This was a work in which the highest created being could have no share,—a work which the touch of a creature would have polluted. The Father, therefore, from all eternity, chose the Son to accomplish it; and the Son willingly offered himself to the work. Though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, he took upon him the form of a Servant, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.³

The prophetical Scriptures, in which this title is found, are not very numerous, but they are extremely rich and comprehensive. The first we turn to, is the 42d chapter of Isaiah. It opens with a solemn appeal to mankind,

¹ Is. xliv. 28 ; xlv. 1.

² Jer. xxv. 9.

³ Philip. ii. 6-8.

from God the Father, ‘ Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.’ God here declares the unction wherewith his beloved Servant should be anointed for his work, ‘ I have put my Spirit upon him ;’ and the success which should crown his labours in all lands, ‘ He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.’ He foretells the meekness, gentleness, and tenderness which should characterize him, ‘ He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking (or dimly burning) flax shall he not quench.’ Along with these softer virtues, the Servant of God was to exercise inflexible justice, unflinching perseverance, and finally, to give law to all the earth. ‘ He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth ; and the isles shall wait for his law.’ The Father then solemnly addresses the Son himself, in the character of his Servant, engaging to uphold his Human nature under the arduous work, and co-operate with him in the prosecution of it. ‘ I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee.’ The work to which this beloved Servant was thus solemnly devoted, was no less than that of mediating a covenant between God and his people : and so entirely was he to be the Centre and Substance of that covenant, that he is here styled the covenant itself. ‘ I will give thee for a covenant of the people.’ The blessings which, under this covenant, he was to bestow, were restoration to liberty, to sight, and to light ; for God was to give him for ‘ a Light to the Gentiles ; to open the blind eyes ; to bring out the prisoners from the prison ; and them that sit in darkness, out of the prison-house.’ Moreover, the Father declared himself perfectly satisfied

with the obedience of his righteous Servant ; ‘ the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake ; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.’

In the 49th chapter of Isaiah, we find the same office of Servant owned and proclaimed by the Son himself, and described in the interesting form of a dialogue between himself and the Father ; thus, with wonderful condescension, revealing to us the counsels of heaven, as far as we are able to comprehend them. He begins by calling the attention of the whole world to what he is about to reveal,—‘ Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken, ye people from far.’ He foretells his own Incarnation, and that the name Jesus or Saviour, would be given to him by the Father, before his birth,—‘ The Lord hath called me from the womb ; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.’ He declares how powerful and effectual a weapon he would be in the Father’s hand,—‘ and he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword ; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft ; in his quiver hath he hid me.’ He tells us that the Father addressed him by the name ‘ Israel,’ in token that he would be, like that patriarch, a Covenant-Head of his people, and, as a Prince, have power with God and with men, and prevail :¹ ‘ and said unto me, Thou art my Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.’ Upon this, the Son anticipates the small success his labours would meet with among God’s ancient people, which, if that were all his recompense, would make him appear to labour in vain, and spend his strength for nought, and in vain,—‘ Yet surely (he adds), my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.’ He is confident that the Lord, who had formed him from the womb to be his

¹ Gen. xxxii. 28.

Servant, would glorify him, and be his strength, although Israel should not be gathered. Yet it is not implied that Israel shall *not* be gathered ; for the Father replies, that he had a greater work in which to employ his Servant, and a more glorious reward to give him, than that of being the Restorer of Israel *alone* ; ‘ and he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved (or the desolations) of Israel ; I will *also* give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my Salvation unto the end of the earth.’ The Father goes on to predict, that although his Servant should be despised and abhorred of men, and especially by his own nation, his subsequent glory should be so great, that kings and princes should rise and worship at his presence, because of the Lord’s choiceness of him. Then, in terms similar to those of the 42d chapter, the Father engages to hear, help, and preserve his Servant ; to give him for a Covenant of the people, for a Restorer, a Deliverer, a Shepherd, and a Guide. And, to the end of the chapter, the prophet proceeds, in glowing colours, to paint the happiness and glory of Israel under this blessed Covenant-Head, with the destruction of all his and their enemies.

In the 52d chapter of this truly evangelical Prophecy, we find a remarkable description of God’s Elect Servant, combining, in wonderful contrast, the depths of his humiliation, with the glory of his exaltation.¹ In the 53d chapter, are those consoling words regarding the Servant of God,—‘ By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many ; for he shall bear their iniquities.’ The reward which, in the character of his Servant, the Father stipulated to bestow upon the Son, is here also revealed,—‘ Therefore will I divide him a por-

¹ Is. lii. 13-15.

tion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong ; because he hath poured out his soul unto death.'

From all these Scriptures combined, we gather the important truths, that the purpose for which God the Son took upon him the form of a Servant, was to mediate a covenant between heaven and earth,—a covenant of mercy and restoration to sinners over the whole world,—a covenant bringing ‘ glory to God in the highest ;’ the result of infinite wisdom and goodness, formed by the united consent of the glorious Persons of the Trinity ; to accomplish which the Son was the appointed and willing Agent, upheld and supported by the Father, and anointed by the Spirit ; and that he was encouraged, under his arduous work, not only by the prospect of the glory thence resulting to the Godhead, and the happiness thence flowing to men, but also, by the prospect of that reward which, as Servant, awaited himself.

We have already had so frequent occasion to trace the obedience in life, and unto death, of our blessed Redeemer, that it is unnecessary here to enter into any detailed account of it. The slightest study of his earthly course must prove to every reader, how entirely he ‘ took upon him the form of a Servant,’ and this not only with patient submission, but with delight. He publicly declared that he came, not to do his own will, but the will of the Father that sent him;¹ that he did always those things that pleased the Father,² and perfectly kept his commandments;³ and the Father testified, with equal clearness, his delight and complacency in the work of Christ his chosen Servant,—by the voice from heaven at his baptism,⁴ at his transfiguration,⁵ and shortly before⁶

¹ John vi. 38.

² John viii. 29.

³ John xv. 10.

⁴ Mat. iii. 17.

⁵ Mat. xvii. 5.

⁶ John xii. 28.

his death ; by sending an angel to strengthen him in his agony in Gethsemane ;¹ and, above all, by raising him from the dead. The whole history of the life and death of the Saviour, proves him to have been the *Beloved* and *Elect* of the Father ; who, for some awful and mysterious purpose, was made lower than the angels, so as to require support from above, and that so urgently, that he implored it with prostration of body, with strong crying and tears. It proves that, though he were a Son, yet he was learning obedience by the things that he suffered. In short, that, on one side, were *obedience* and *dependance*, on the other, *satisfaction* and *support*.

THE BRANCH.

WE are now to view the Saviour under a somewhat different aspect, as THE BRANCH, or, GOD'S SERVANT THE BRANCH. This title is varied, almost every time it occurs in Scripture. We find it in the following forms,— ‘The Branch of the Lord ;’² ‘the Branch which God has made strong for himself ;’³ ‘a Branch out of the roots of Jesse ;’⁴ ‘a righteous Branch raised unto David ;’⁵ ‘a Branch of righteousness caused to grow up unto him ;’⁶ ‘the Man whose name is the Branch ;’⁷ and ‘God's Servant, the Branch.’⁸

The combined meaning of all these modifications of the title seems to be, that the Branch was to be a powerful Agent, raised up by God, to accomplish his will, in restoring Israel to his worship and favour; that this Agent should grow up out of the apparently dry stock of the family of David; and, from small and despised beginnings,

¹ Luke xxii. 43.

² Is. iv. 2.

³ Ps. lxxx. 15.

⁴ Is. xi. 1.

⁵ Jer. xxiii. 5.

⁶ Jer. xxxiii. 15

⁷ Zech. vi. 12.

⁸ Zech. iii. 8.

advanced to dignity, usefulness, and glory. The word translated *Branch*, is the same as that translated *Sun-rising*, or *Day-spring*, in Luke i. 78, which latter term also conveys the idea of something which, from a faint beginning, would gradually rise to super-eminent lustre and glory.

There is doubtless but ONE to whom this title can truly belong ; ONE who, although Man, is a Branch of the Godhead. He alone, of all the sons of men, is a *righteous* Branch, perfectly righteous himself, and communicating righteousness to others ; for this is the name whereby he is called, ‘ THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.’

In human nature, he sprang up, a young and tender plant, ‘ as a root out of a dry ground,’ a despised scion from the almost withered stem of Jesse ; the world could see no beauty nor comeliness in him ; but, in the eyes of the Lord, he was ‘ beauty and glory,’¹ and his fruit excellent and comely. The Lord planted him upon an high mountain and eminent, even upon the holy hill of Zion, and made him strong for himself, ‘ a plant of renown,’ ‘ a goodly cedar.’ He has indeed brought forth boughs, and borne fruit ; and under his branches, sinners, from every clime, have sought and found refreshment and permanent shelter.²

But, although Jesus Christ alone is The Branch, yet in this, as well as in other offices, he was typified by human agents. Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and Joshua, the high-priest, the one a branch of the house of Aaron, the other a branch of the house of David, being chosen instruments to bring back the Jews to their own land, to restore to them their civil and religious privileges, and to re-build the temple, were types of the true

¹ Is. iv. 2, margin.

² Ezek. xvii. 22-24 ; xxxiv. 29.

Branch, both separately and by their union. To understand this type, we must study the history of the Jews' return, and the building of the Second Temple, as related by Ezra; and, along with it, the prophecies of Haggai and Zeechariah.

Exactly seventy years after Jehoiachin had been carried in fetters to Babylon, with all the strength of the nation, and the vessels of the Lord's House had been placed into the idol's temple, the Lord fulfilled his word spoken by Jeremiah, concerning the *period* of his people's captivity,¹ and that spoken by Isaiah, concerning the *instrument of their deliverance*,² by stirring up Cyrus, that servant whom he named and appointed one hundred and twenty years before his birth, to decree their restoration to liberty. Cyrus openly acknowledged the mandate of Jehovah, saying, 'The Lord God of heaven hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.'³ And he granted free permission to all the Jews to return to their own land; charging his subjects to assist them with every thing necessary to the re-building of the Temple, and himself setting the example, by restoring all the sacred vessels. The proclamation of liberty was general; yet none availed themselves of it, but those 'whose spirit God raised' to go up and build his House. These formed but a small portion of the nation; which is not so much to be wondered at, when we consider, that the journey was long and hazardous, the work arduous, and the prospect of worldly advantage distant. The city of Jerusalem and the Temple were in ruins; the land desolate, having lain waste for three-score years; enemies numerous and powerful awaited them, to oppose their returning prosperity; and none of that generation could have seen the land of their fathers.

¹ Jer. xxv. 11, 12; Dan. ix. 2.

² Is. xlv. 1.

³ Ezra i.

and the House of their God, except those who were upwards of fifty years old ; many of whom had probably formed connexions, and established themselves with comfort, in the land of their captivity, so as to feel reluctant to quit it. It is rather a singular proof of the benefit the Jews had derived from affliction, that so many as forty-two thousand, including the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, about four thousand priests, and a small company of Levites, willingly engaged in this ‘work of faith.’¹

The faithful band, now styled ‘Children of the Province,’ arrived in safety, ‘by the good hand of their God upon them ;’² and as soon as the necessary preparations were made, laid the foundation of the Temple ; not neglecting, in the meantime, such acts of public worship as their circumstances admitted of ; and looking on High, with exemplary simplicity, for defence and succour. When the foundation of this Second House was laid, the emotions of the people were of so mingled a nature, that the shouts of joy could not be distinguished from the noise of weeping. Many of the aged men, contrasting the materials of the present building with those of Solomon’s Temple, and, no doubt, the present state of the nation with its former prosperity, wept with a loud voice, while the rest shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

This was, however, too good a work to proceed unmolested by the adversaries of God and his people.³ The Samaritans, who are described in 2d Kings xvii., as those who ‘feared the Lord, and served their own graven images,’ came with insidious offers of help ; and their unholy aid being rejected by Zerubbabel and Joshua, they took revenge by weakening the hands of the Jews,

¹ Ezra ii. 64.

² Ezra iii.

³ Ezra iv.

and troubling them in building. They also hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus; and during the reigns of his successors, they persisted in their malicious designs, till at length they obtained from Artaxerxes authority to stop the building, and came and ‘made them to cease by force and power;’ so that it stood still for about two years.

It appears, however, that the people were too much intimidated by man’s opposition; and that they were falling into self-indulgence and vanity; decorating their own houses, while they made frivolous excuses for not re-commencing the work of the Lord’s House. Even Joshua and Zerubbabel needed to be roused, encouraged, and directed, to prosecute their labours anew. The Lord therefore sent his prophets Haggai and Zechariah, with rebukes for their present slothfulness, and promises of blessing and success upon their return to duty; and these messages produced the happiest effects. Both leaders and people resumed the work with alacrity; and received the most gracious assurances of the Lord’s presence with them, of the completion of the work to which he had appointed them, and of his returning to Jerusalem with mercies, to spread abroad her cities again, to be unto her a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of her.¹

The Lord knew perfectly the different fears and discouragements that weighed down the hearts of his people, and gave to each, consolations and promises suited to their case.² To those who despaired of the work ever being completed, he said, ‘The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before

¹ See Hag. i., and Zech. i. & ii.

² Zech. iv. 6-10.

Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain ; and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Graee, graee unto it.' To those who had seen the House of God in its former glory, and in whose eyes it was now in comparison as nothing, God said, 'The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts ; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.'¹

Again he exhorted them to be strong and work, for he was with them. According as he had covenanted with them, when they came out of Egypt, so his Spirit remained with them ; therefore they need not fear, either for the completion of the Temple, or for its glory. God reminded them that the silver and the gold were his ; and he could, had he seen fit, have embellished the latter House with as great splendour as the former. But he was preparing for it a brighter glory, even a spiritual and heavenly one. It should stand to be the scene of that last revolution, which God purposed to effect in the religious worship of his people ; and should be filled with glory by the personal ministry of Immanuel, 'the Desire of all nations,' who should there give peace.² This is the only sense in which the Second Temple could be said to exceed the First. For, not only was it inferior in costliness of materials, and beauty of workmanship ; it also lacked many precious tokens of Jehovah's presence. The Ark is supposed to have been lost or destroyed at the time of the captivity ; also the Tables of the Covenant, and the Mercy-seat ; there was now no Urim and Thummim ; and the Shechinah, or visible glory, which filled the Tabernacle, and the First Temple, is supposed never to have filled the Second. No fire from heaven consumed the sacrifices ; common fire was needed for the

¹ Hag. ii. 1-9.

² Hag. ii. 7.

purpose. All these were evident signals that the Lord was gradually withdrawing his peculiar favour from Israel, as a Church, in preparation for a more permanent and spiritual Church ; and they prove, beyond doubt, that in no possible way could the predictions of the surpassing glory of the latter House have been fulfilled, but by the presence and teaching of the **LORD OF GLORY** himself.

This Temple bore a nearer resemblance to the spiritual Temple which Messiah was to build, than did the former one. Zerubbabel and Joshua, therefore, as the servants appointed to build it, were closer types of Him, in this respect, than Solomon was.

But to return to our narrative.¹ On re-commencing their work, the Jews were questioned by the Persian Governor ; but the investigation thereby induced, was overruled by God to the furtherance, instead of the frustration, of the design. The roll containing the decree of Cyrus was found ; and Darius not only confirmed that decree, but made it more imperative ; ordering his subjects, on pain of death, to let the Jews build the House of God in his place. The royal orders were promptly obeyed ; the Jews builded, and it is recorded, that ‘they prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo.’²

Thus, in spite of all obstacles, the work decreed by God was ‘begun, continued, and ended in him ;’ and Joshua and Zerubbabel were the chief instruments in the accomplishment of it. But, still further to prove that those two men were types of Christ the Branch, both separately, and by their union, we turn to some passages in Zechariah, where their typical character is clearly set forth.

In chapter third of this Prophecy, Joshua and his

¹ Ezra v. & vi.

² Ezra vi. 14.

fellows (his companions in building, of whom Zerubbabel was the chief) are termed ‘*men wondered at*,’¹ or *typical men*; and, in explanation of this term, the Lord declares, ‘Behold, I will bring forth my Servant THE BRANCH;’ intimating that these builders, with Joshua at their head, were a figure of the Restorer of the Church, the Messiah. Then, in chapter fourth, Zerubbabel and Joshua are represented in vision to the prophet, as two olive-trees, whose branches, through golden pipes, fed with oil the seven lamps of the golden candlestick. In answer to the prophet’s question, ‘What be these two olive branches?’ he was told, they were the ‘*two anointed ones*,’ which stood by the Lord of the whole earth. This is surely saying, that Zerubbabel and Joshua typified Christ, as Anointed with the Holy Spirit without measure, to be the King and High Priest of the Church, and to build, illuminate, and sanctify the spiritual Temple. In chapter sixth, the typical character of Joshua is exhibited with still greater clearness, by the ‘*two crowns*,’ one of royal dignity, the other of priestly ministration, being put on his head; and by his being commanded to behold, in this typical transaction, ‘*the Man whose name is THE BRANCH*,’ who should grow up out of his place, out of the seed of David, build the temple of the Lord, and bear the glory; sit and rule, as a Priest upon his throne; and, by the union, in his Person, of the Kingly and Priestly offices, accomplish ‘*the counsel of peace*.’² The gold, of which the two crowns were made, being presented by men from a great distance, typified the admission of the Gentiles into the Church; and the crowns were deposited in the Temple, as a token that they who were ‘far off, shall come and build in the temple of the Lord.’

¹ Zech. iii. 8.

² Zech. vi. 9–15.

A remarkable prediction in the end of Haggai's Prophecy, points out Zerubbabel as a type of the Saviour, though under a different title from that we are now studying.¹ After declaring the approach of awful revolutions in kingdoms, and the destruction of heathen nations, the Lord of Hosts thus speaks,—‘In that day will I take thee, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a *signet*; for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of Hosts.’ This promise was doubtless fulfilled, in its primary sense, in the protection granted to Zerubbabel and the people under him, amid surrounding tumults. But it has a larger and more glorious sense. The revolutions predicted were to take place long after Zerubbabel slept with his fathers; they are still going on, and will continue, till the power of Antichrist is overthrown. The name Zerubbabel here must then denote Christ; by union to whom, his people are *sealed* with the image of God, as his peculiar property, and defended from all the tumults which agitate the rest of the world, except inasmuch as is conducive to their final good.

The type now considered, in the joint operation of Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the Governor and Representative of the house of David, is rendered still more complete, by the additional co-operation of the prophets: ‘With them were the prophets of God helping them.’² This beautifully illustrates the Prophetic office of Christ, which, by his word and Spirit, gives efficacy to his Priestly atonement, and to his Kingly authority.

Let us now briefly consider Christ, as the *Builder of the Second Temple*; for, as the soul and body of man were originally formed a temple of the Deity, it is the

¹ Hag. ii. 20–23.

² Ezra v. 2.

work of Christ to restore them to this, their chief end and glory. And how does he perform this? Having laid the foundation in his own blood, he, by the united exercise of all his offices, rears a temple of the Holy Ghost in the heart of each believer, and builds them together into a holy temple in the Lord, ‘an habitation of God through the Spirit.’ Our blessed Zerubbabel fails not, nor is discouraged in his work. He never requires to be roused to activity; for, though at times his work may seem to languish, all seeming hindrances shall turn to its advantage. The mountains raised by Earth and Hell against his Church, shall sink before him to plains; and, however fearful friends may ‘despise the day of small things;’ however malicious foes may hire counsellors to frustrate his purpose, he will, wherever he lays the foundation, carry the work on to perfection: it may be slowly, and with many interruptions; but in no case will he fail to bring forth the head-stone with shoutings, while angels and glorified spirits shall cry, ‘Graee, graee unto it.’

But it may be asked, How can the glory of this latter house be greater than that of the former? Since both soul and body are debased and polluted by sin, so as even in the regenerate to be ineapable of rendering to God pure and holy worship, how can they form a temple even comparable to that formed in Paradise? True, the materials are debased and polluted; but does it not enhance the glory of the Divine Architect, that he can raise, out of such materials, a temple to the Lord? True, the temple is mean and worthless; but does it not glorify the condescension of God, that he comes down and dwells in such a mean abode?

But, besides these considerations, there are others which prove the latter house more glorious than the

former. Man, in his state of innocence, enjoyed the presence and indwelling of Jehovah, as his Creator, Benefactor, and Friend ; and doubtless contemplated, with holy delight, his glorious perfections. But *he* could not, as *we* may, if by Christ we have been made temples of the Holy Ghost, know God as his Saviour, his Brother, his Surety, his Immanuel. The *second temple*, therefore, is honoured with more of the personal presence (if we may so speak) of the Lord of Hosts ; and is therefore more glorious than the *first*.

THE BELOVED OF GOD.

THAT the Son was, from all eternity, the Object of infinite delight and complacency to the Father, we cannot doubt. But, in an especial sense, he is called his BELOVED, on account of his work of Redemption. And, as we formerly remarked of the relation of Son, so we would remark of the title Beloved, that it seems revealed to us chiefly as connected with our redemption. For proof of this, we refer to the principal passages of Scripture, where the affection subsisting between the First and Second Persons of the sacred Trinity is declared. In Isaiah fifth, it is in anticipation of his office of Lord of the Vineyard, that the Son is styled the Well-Beloved of God, and perhaps also of the Church. It is in anticipation of his labours as the Elect Servant, that, in the forty-second of Isaiah, the Father pronounces the Son, Him in whom he is *well pleased*, or, as quoted by St. Matthew, his *Bclored*, in whom his soul is well pleased. It was at his baptism, which was the prelude to his ministry, that a voice from heaven proclaimed, ‘ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ It was

to honour his ministry, and to call the attention of men to it, that the same voice spake from the bright cloud, on the Mount of Transfiguration, saying, ‘ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him.’ It was with reference to his delegated authority, as the WORD, that Jesus himself declared the love of the Father towards him. ‘ The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth.’¹ Again, it was in reference to his obedience as a Servant, that Jesus declared the Father’s constant love to him, ‘ I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.’² It was *on account* of his obedience unto death for our redemption, ‘ Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.’³ Finally, it was with reference to his authority as Mediator, that the Baptist declared concerning Jesus, ‘ The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.’⁴

The same connexion may be traced in the Apostolical writings. Is Christ called ‘ the Beloved?’ it is as the only way of acceptance to his people; ‘ he hath made us accepted in the beloved.’⁵

Is he styled God’s ‘ dear Son,’ or ‘ the Son of his love?’ it is in connexion with his people’s deliverance from the power of darkness, and translation into his kingdom.⁶

That the love the Father is said to bear to the Son has a special reference to his office of Mediator and Covenant-Head of his redeemed, is further evident, from the delightful assurances given by Jesus, that that love is extended to all who are united to him, ‘ The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.’⁷ With what grateful

¹ John v. 20.

² John xv. 10.

³ John x. 17.

⁴ John iii. 35.

⁵ Eph. i. 6.

⁶ Col. i. 13.

⁷ John xvi. 27.

admiration should the disciples of Jesus hear him declare, that his own love and the Father's towards them, is the same in kind, though doubtless infinitely lower in degree, with that borne by the Father to himself, ‘As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.’¹ ‘That the world may know that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.’²

As our main object, at present, is to delineate the relations in which the Son stands to the Father, we forbear entering upon his relation to the Church, as *her* Beloved; and proceed shortly to consider the last title under this class :—

THE MAN OF GOD'S RIGHT HAND.

The ‘right hand’ denotes power and strength. The Scripture generally imputes to God’s ‘right hand’ all the effects of his Omnipotence; as in Exodus xv. 6, ‘Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy righthand, O Lord, hath dashed in picces the enemy.’ And in the book of Psalms, we find all the varied exercises of Almighty power and strength ascribed to God’s right hand. By his right hand he *saves them that trust in him.*³ By his right hand he *finds out them that hate him.*⁴ In short, whether for salvation, or destruction, ‘the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly;’⁵ his right hand hath gotten him the victory.⁶

The church is the ‘mountain’ which God’s right hand hath purchased;⁷ the ‘vineyard’ which his right hand hath planted.⁸ The Redeemer is the *Man of his right*

¹ John xv. 9.

² John xvii. 23.

³ Ps. xvii. 7.

⁴ Ps. xxi. 8.

⁵ Ps. cxviii. 15.

⁶ Ps. xcvi. 1.

⁷ Ps. lxxviii. 54.

⁸ Ps. lxxx. 15.

hand, the Son of Man, whom he hath made strong for himself,¹ to execute the work of purchasing this mountain, and planting this vineyard, and who was to sit at the right hand of Jehovah till his enemies were made his footstool.²

The aspect of the Redeemer, then, whieh this title presents, is one of supreme power, honour, and authority, as reeeiving honour for the work which he finished on earth, and as invested with authority and power to carry it on in heaven. While standing as an accused criminal before the high priest, Jesus assured his hearers that they should one day behold him sitting on the right hand of power, and eoming in the clouds of heaven;³ and when he was reeeived up to heaven, his disciples, following him with the eye of faith, saw him take possession of his glorious seat on the right hand of God.⁴ Soon after the aseension of their Master, the Apostles reeeived the wonderful gifts of the Holy Ghost, and testified to all around them, that these were the fruits of his exaltation at God's right hand.⁵ The martyr Stephen was strengthened and eomforted in his dying agonies by *seeing Jesus* standing at the right hand of God;⁶ and his brethren were eneouraged in their longer combat by the same blessed view, as is evident from their frequent al-lusion to it in their Epistles.⁷ They would rejoiee in the honour conferred on Jesus on his own aecount. Ardently and affectionately as they loved him, they must have delighted in the thought, that now ‘all his groans were past, his blood, his pain, and toils;’ that having endured the cross and its shame, he had now entered into the joy set before him, and was reeeiving the reward whieh, as

¹ Ps. lxxx. 15–17.

² Ps. ex. 1.

³ Mark xiv. 62.

⁴ Mark xvi. 19 ; Heb. i. 3.

⁵ Acts ii. 33.

⁶ Acts vii. 55, 56.

⁷ Rom. viii. 34 ; Eph. i. 20 ; Col. iii. 1.

a faithful servant, awaited him. Having so lately seen him despised and insulted by men, his visage so marred more than any man, his sacred person exposed to shame and spitting, they must have exulted in the contrast which his aspect now presented ; for they beheld him exalted far above all principalities and powers, angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him. They had lately heard him bemoan the desertion, and seen him almost sink under the wrath, of his heavenly Father ; but how has the scene changed ! He is now the Man whom God ‘delighteth to honour ;’ whom, on account of his obedience in life, and unto death, God has highly exalted ; and to whom he has given a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.¹

But *this* was, and continues to be, the main cause of triumph to the Church, in the exaltation of Christ, that he is placed at God’s right hand as the Representative and Forerunner, the Prince and Saviour, the High Priest, Prophet, and King of his people.² By carrying up his human nature to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, he gave the strongest possible pledge, that all his authority and power should be exerted in securing the salvation of his people.

We have now, as was proposed, illustrated separately some of those relations in which, as Man and Mediator, God the Son stands to God the Father. We have viewed him as *Elect* from all eternity to *serve* his Father in the great work of man’s redemption. We have seen that as a *Servant* his office was to *restore* men to the favour and image of God, in which office he was predicted and typified under the name of *The Branch* ; that

¹ Philip. ii. 8-11.

² Eph. i. 20-23.

he perfectly executed this office, and obtained thereby the name of *Beloved*, and the highest place of honour and authority as *the Man of God's right hand*.

PRACTICAL REMARKS.

We have now to inquire, what practical effect may be expected from the contemplation of these sacred mysteries? Unquestionably, the first effect should be, an increased value for that work which forms the subject of a Covenant between the glorious Persons of the God-head,—which produces (if we may so express it) a new emanation of love in the bosom of the Father towards the Son, and exalts Him who, in his own nature, is infinite.

The emotions which next arise after this exercise, are a mixture of indignation, grief, and shame, to see and to feel how this work is neglected by the very beings for whose benefit it was performed. It is impossible to say which most predominates in this neglect, the *folly* or the wicked *ingratitude* of mankind,—the folly of disregarding that which Infinite Wisdom deemed worthy of its united energies, or the ingratitude of turning coldly away from the exertions of Infinite Love, manifested in the co-operation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the recovery of a guilty and fallen race.

But there are other practical reflections suggested by this subject, to which we may profitably turn. Each of the relations in which *Christ* stands to the Father produces a corresponding relation between *his people* and the Father. Because *he* is the *Elect* of God, *they* are *chosen* in him to salvation. But they are not chosen to be idle recipients of the blessings of salvation; they are

called to be *servants* of God. Because Jesus perfectly fulfilled his office of Servant, they are bound to serve God, and their poor defective services are accepted and rewarded for his sake. Is this, then, *our* character? Do we wish to be distinguished as servants of God? or do we not sometimes blush to assign, as the motive of our conduct in any particular case, that assigned by the pious Jews for their diligence in rebuilding the temple, ‘We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth?’ Does it not come more easily to us to plead some human authority, or our own inclination? If so, how little do we resemble Christ, who, though he was the eternal and co-equal Son of God, yet gloried in being his Servant!

Every part of the history we have studied under the title Branch, illustrates the dealings of God with his believing people. He begins by *raising their spirit*, without which, though the proclamation of gospel liberty is general, they have no desire to avail themselves of it. At first they begin to work with diligence and zeal, but often, alas! they grow weary of stemming the torrent of opposition which always, more or less, assails those who set out in good earnest to serve the Lord. Their pious endeavours are, indeed, sometimes frustrated ‘by force and power’ which they cannot resist; but they are naturally disposed to yield too much to outward difficulties, to fear men more than God, and to conform to the vain customs of the world, till, partly from real impediments, and partly from their own remissness and distrust of God, they cease altogether to work for him, and can scarcely be distinguished from the men of the world. This is a sad case, but, we fear, not an uncommon one; and if perseverance and success depended on man, the work would never be resumed at all. But wherever it has been truly begun, it *will* be resumed.

The Lord will send his messengers to these his slothful servants, saying, ‘ Consider your ways.’ He will also, perhaps, speak to them in his Providence, by marring their worldly comforts, to remind them of their duty. Along with these rebukes, their God sends them comfortable promises, and assures them, that, according as he covenanteth with them when they first came out of the bondage of their unregenerate state, so his Spirit remaineth with them ; therefore they need not fear ; for He who hath begun a good work in them will certainly perfect it, to the praise of the glory of his grace. Thus rebuked, and thus encouraged, the servants of God resume their labours : and, though still beset with fightings without, and fears within, the work prospers in their hands ; the Lord takes pleasure in it, and is glorified ; all seeming evils are overruled by him for good ; and at length it is triumphantly completed, ‘ not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.’

We have already stated the blessed connexion that subsists between God’s love to Christ, and his love to the people redeemed by Christ. But the subject is so important and so delightful, that we must dwell a little longer on it, deeply conscious as we are of inability to speak of it aright.

In one sense, ‘ The Lord is loving to every man.’ He bestows upon all men mercy, compassion and benevolence, far superior, nay, contrary to their deserts : and he has given the most wonderful demonstration of love to a guilty world, by giving his Only Begotten and Dearly Beloved Son, that all believing sinners, of every nation, age, and degree, might not perish, but have everlasting life. This, however, is not the kind of love which we are considering at present. The love wherewith God loves his redeemed is a love of complacency and delight,

on account of their union with his Beloved Son, and of their being stamped by him as the Signet, with the Divine image. This is the favour God bears to his own people, and it is inseparably connected with *election* on one side, and with final *salvation* on the other. We know, there are those who speak and write of the Love of God, in terms so universal and indefinite, as almost to persuade us that it could be enjoyed otherwise than by union with Christ, the Beloved. But we know of no special love shown to sinners but through him : and, humbly endeavouring to follow the light of Scripture, we proceed to inquire, *How we may ascertain our own share in God's special love?*

The question is of immense importance ; and many mistakes prevail with regard to it ; for, while some erroneously and unwarrantably lay claim to the love of God ; others, though truly loved by him, rob themselves of much comfort, and Him of much glory, by not knowing and believing the love that God has to them.

First then, we have no reason to expect immediate revelation of the love of God to our souls, like that vouchsafed to Daniel, ‘ O ! man, greatly beloved.’ The Lord does indeed at times give special tokens of love to the hearts of his people, especially in seasons of affliction, or in answer to fervent prayer. But we may be deceived by sudden impulses and violent affections : and in general, we must try our interest in the love of God by those tests which the Bible furnishes, and which are more tangible.

The love of God to redeemed sinners is *sovereign, free, and undeserved*; not bestowed on account of any good, seen or foreseen in themselves : yet it is inseparably connected with certain graces and features of character, the possession of which proves our interest in it. We remarked before, that the love of God to his people was

connected with *election* on one side, and with *salvation*, or *eternal life* on the other : and it is equally inseparable from *faith* and *sanctification*. In searching the Scriptures, we find these things constantly in connexion. The ‘*beloved of God*,’ whom Paul addressed, were ‘*called to be saints*,’ and their ‘*faith*’ was spoken of throughout the whole world. It was by the Thessalonians’ ‘*work of faith*,’ ‘*labour of love*,’ and ‘*patience of hope*,’ in our Lord Jesus Christ, that Paul knew them to be ‘*elected*’ and ‘*beloved*.’ It was because he perceived in them ‘*sanctification by the Spirit*,’ and ‘*belief of the truth*,’ that he gave thanks for them as ‘*brethren beloved of the Lord*,’ ‘*from the begining chosen unto salvation*.’

Similar connexions may be traced in every part of God’s word : but more particularly in the writings of the Apostle John. He treats more fully of the Love of God than any of his brethren : but he always describes it by some of its effects, and stirs up Christians to examine their interest in the former, by their possession of the latter. The great test by which he teaches us to judge whether *we are beloved of God*, is *our own love to God, and to all who bear his image*. This he traces to its true source, the previous love of God to us ; not only in giving his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, but in giving his Spirit to apply to us individually the benefits procured by Christ, to transform us into his holy image, and bestow upon us the privileges and dispositions of God’s children. Now, we know that none of these things spring naturally from the soil of the human heart ; and therefore, if we perceive any measure of them in ourselves, evincing that *we love God*, we may safely conclude that *he has loved us*, otherwise we could never have loved him. There is indeed a beautiful re-action between the sense of God’s love in the

heart, and the effects of that love in the life. The more clearly we apprehend the love of our heavenly Father, the more heartily do we devote ourselves to his service ; and, the more devoted our service, the clearer our apprehension of the love of God toward us.

If then, after examining ourselves by these Scriptural tests, we find that our love is supremely fixed on God, and only rests on created objects, in proportion as they bear his likeness ; that we love every attribute of God, even those which by nature we disliked ; that a sense of his amazing love to us, in Christ, has transformed us in some degree into his image ; that although we dare hardly consider ourselves *saints*, it is the most earnest desire of our souls to be made such ; and that we strive to keep our souls open to the influences of the Holy Ghost, that we may be temples of the living God ;—if we have experienced the power of God's love, in that he has quickened us from our death in trespasses and sins, made us willing to labour and suffer for him, and thankfully to receive and obey the rousing messages, which, from time to time, he sends us ; if he has bestowed upon us the Spirit of adoption, and taught us to esteem his ‘ loving-kindness better than life :’—If these things be in us, though in much weakness, let us not refuse to take the comfort of them ; but humbly trust that we are of that happy number, whom God has loved with an everlasting love, and whom with his loving kindness he has drawn. As to sensible manifestations of God's love, we must leave it to his sovereign will, to vouchsafe them in his own time and measure ; avoiding every thing that unfits us for them, and treasuring them up, when granted, as our choicest blessings ; but not doubting of our state, because they are not so vivid nor so frequent as we desire.

Finally, let us remember, that as it was by union with

Jesus the Beloved, we first became partakers of the love of the Father, it is only by clinging close to him that we can maintain a sense of that love. We must *keep ourselves* in the love of God, by building up ourselves on our most holy faith, by praying in the Holy Ghost, and looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.¹ And in proportion as we, by faith, realize the blessed truth, that Christ who died, yea rather, who is risen again, is even at the right hand of God, making intercession for us, we shall be able to say, with the Apostle, ‘I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’²

Because Jesus is in human nature exalted to God’s right hand, his people shall in the great day be placed at *his* right hand, and shall enter with him into life eternal. In the meantime, what joyful confidence, what holy elevation, should this blessed truth inspire; what consolation in adversity, what strength for duty; what steadfastness in seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God! What a powerful argument is herein put into our mouths, when pleading with the Father for those covenant-blessings, of which, in ourselves, we are so unworthy; ‘Let thy hand be upon the Man of thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom thou madest strong for thyself!’

We cannot take leave of this subject, without turning for a moment to the other side of the picture. As Jesus is at God’s right hand, to save and protect his friends; he is there also, to dash in pieces his enemies. If his Omnipotence as God, and his authority as Mediator, be not

¹ Jude 20, 21.

² Rom. viii. 34-39.

exerted in subduing us to be his willing and faithful servants, they must be exerted in punishing us with everlasting destruction. And if we are not among the elect of God, holy and beloved, we must be numbered amongst the wicked whom his soul abhorreth.

From this dreadful doom, good Lord deliver us !

END OF VOL. I.

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